

Greece-Türkiye Land Border: Locals' Experiences and Perspectives at the Turkish Borderland

by

Oğuzhan İzmir

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
International Relations



January 5, 2023

Greece-Türkiye Land Border: Locals' Experiences and Perspectives at the Turkish Borderland

Koç University

Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities

This is to certify that I have examined this copy of a master's thesis by

Oğuzhan İzmir

and have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by the final
examining committee have been made.

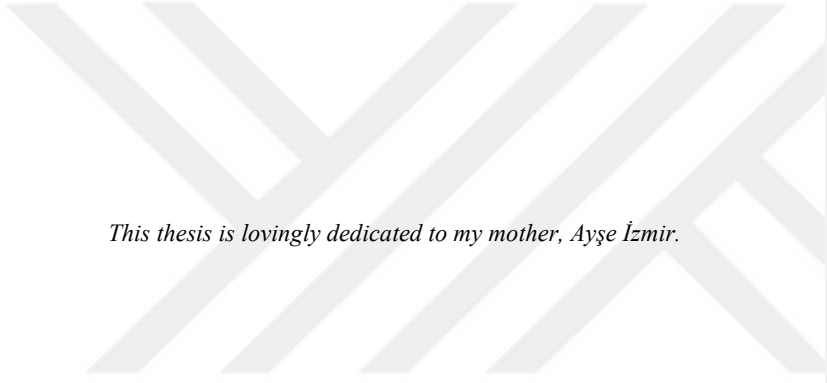
Committee Members:

Prof. Ahmet İçduygu

Assist. Prof. Sedef Turper

Prof. Deniz Ş. Sert

Date: 05.01.23



This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my mother, Ayşe İzmir.

ABSTRACT

Greece-Türkiye Land Border: Locals' Experiences and Perspectives at the Turkish Borderland

Oğuzhan İzmir

Master of Arts in International Relations

October 10, 2022

Greece-Türkiye land border is a sui generis case with its unilaterally “open” border regime within the context of European external border management. This thesis analyzes the role of Turkish borderland residents’ daily practices and discourses in the sustenance and transformation of this border. The findings indicate that the mobility patterns and ownership regimes in the area and the moral narratives justifying locals’ practices are inherent elements of the border and that the sudden change in the structural features of the border caused by the 2020 Edirne Events transformed these features of everyday life. In the current status quo, locals benefit from the economic opportunities of smuggling industry and their economic and humanitarian endeavors enable the migrants to travel in an unfamiliar landscape. Yet, the events also increased the feeling of insecurity and forced a form of co-habitation onto locals in which they unwillingly share their private and common spaces with migrants. These opportunities and insecurities are reframed in a moral narrative that positions locals as moral border workers, justifying their actions through representations of migrants’ sufferings. Locals’ discourses generating categories of “others” are by and large in rapport with this moral framework.

ÖZETÇE

Yunanistan-Türkiye Kara Sınırı: Türk Sınır Bölgesinde Yerel Halkın Deneyimleri ve Perspektifleri

Oğuzhan İzmir

Uluslararası İlişkiler, Yüksek Lisans

October 10, 2022

Türkiye-Yunanistan kara sınırı, 2020’den beri tek taraflı “açık” sınır rejimi ile Avrupa sınır yönetimi bağlamında nevi şahsına münhasır bir vaziyet teşkil etmektedir. Elinizdeki tez, bu sınırının sürdürülmesinde ve dönüştürülmesinde Türkiye kısmında yaşayan yerlilerin günlük pratiklerinin ve söylemlerinin rolünü analiz etmektedir. Bulgular, bölgedeki hareketlilik örüntülerinin, mülkiyet rejimlerinin ve yerel halkın gündelik pratiklerini meşrulaştıran ahlaki söylemlerin sınırın içkin bir özelliği olduğunu işaret etmekte ve 2020 Edirne Olayları ile sınırın yapısal özelliklerinde meydana gelen ani değişikliğin, sınırdaki gündelik hayatın bu özelliklerini dönüştürdüğünü göstermektedir. Mevcut statükoda yerel halk, kaçakçılık endüstrisinin ekonomik fırsatlarından yararlanmakta ve yerel halkın bu bağlamdaki ekonomik ve insani pratikleri, göçmenlerin kendilerine yabancı bir coğrafyada yollarını bularak sınırı aşmalarını mümkün kılmaktadır. Ancak Edirne Olayları aynı zamanda yerlileri göçmenlerle özel ve ortak alanlarını istemeden paylaştıkları bir tür birlikte yaşama zorlayarak güvensizlik duygusunu da artırmıştır. Bu fırsatlar ve güvensizlikler, yerel halkı eylemlerini göçmenlerin acıları üzerinden meşrulaştıran “sınır işçileri” olarak konumlandıran bir ahlaki anlatıda yeniden çerçevelenmektedir. Yerel halkın “ötekiye” dair söylemleri, genel olarak bu ahlaki çerçeveye uyum içindedir.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The last three years when I engaged in this research was globally challenging and it is yet only a dream to think of a future without crisis. But the emanation of that sweet dream is so powerful that I presumptuously state that I will always recall these times with great joy! My beloved family and people, thank you for my belief in a beautiful future, the smile on your faces is the mere reason it exists.

I thank my advisor Ahmet İcduygu for his guidance during my research process and what he taught in his lessons, for those classes were formative for the research subject and my perspective as a researcher. I also thank him for introducing me to great people whose help and support was crucial for the fate of this thesis. Among them, Sibel Karadağ has a special place for her generosity in mentoring me and sharing the valuable information from her meticulous fieldwork in the region. The hardship of navigating in a theoretically crowded literature and a barren case became manageable with her help, especially in leading me on the confusing border nomenclature and in drawing my attention to social phenomena worth studying. As I started my journey with a rather broad vision of what I wanted to study, her and my advisor's comments enabled me to settle on a clear framework and present the findings.

I thank Ceminay Kara for being a precious research partner and friend. Our project culminated in our book *Thalweg* was a great journey, almost like a playground for our quirky imagination. *Thalweg's* fieldwork and the fieldwork I conducted for the thesis was overlapping in many ways, yet our fieldwork was a whole new world that cultivated my perspective and authorship. I thank Ceminay for being both a lifesaver and a good influence with her charismatic personality and warmhearted nature.

I must note that the Edirne border is not an easy area to access and survey considering the recent events and increased security measures. My fieldwork was only possible thanks to my acquaintances in the region. I thank everyone I met through these connections or by coincidence, who opened their homes to me, took me on trips to the border, led me to the correct resources during my research, and who did not hesitate to share their thoughts and lives with me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	ix
Abbreviations.....	x
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Scope and Delimitations	1
1.2 Structure of the Thesis	4
Chapter 2: Introduction to the Case and Background Information	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.1 Delineation of the Border and the Following Transformations.....	5
2.2 Demography of the Region with a Historical Perspective.....	8
2.2.1 Nation-Building and Population Exchanges	9
2.2.2 Internal Migration in the 21st Century	12
2.2.3 International Migration and Transit Migration in the 21st Century..	12
2.3 Border Security and Cross-Border Cooperation.....	13
2.3.1 Edirne Events as a Turning Point for Border Management	17
Chapter 3: Theoretical Background.....	21
3.1 Earlier Studies on Political Boundaries	21
3.1.1 Early Studies of Borders in International Relations.....	22
3.1.2 Early Studies on Borders in Political Geography.....	23
3.1.3 Emergence of Border Studies as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study	25
3.2 Current State of the Literature	26
3.2.1 What is a “Border”?.....	27
3.2.2 Who Borders?	29
3.2.3 On the “‘Where’ of Borders”	31
3.3 Borderscapes and Borderscaping.....	34
3.3.1 Borderscaping in Response to Main Issues in Border Studies.....	36
3.3.2 Criticism	38

3.3.3	Borderscape as an Analytical Framework.....	39
3.3.4	Borderscape as an Interpretative Framework.....	41
Chapter 4:	Methodology and Research Design	42
4.1	Research Design	42
4.1.1	The Research Area and Subjects	44
4.1.2	Data Collection.....	44
4.1.3	Analysis of Findings.....	46
4.1.4	Level of Analysis.....	47
4.2	Shortcomings and Limitations of the Research Design.....	48
4.2.1	Shortcomings of the Operational Framework	48
4.2.2	Sampling and Representativeness	49
4.3	The problem of Objectivity and Positionality of the Researcher.....	50
4.3.1	Introspective Reflection.....	51
Chapter 5:	Patterns of Mobility on the Crossroads of Opportunities and Insecurities..	53
5.1	The Dead Zone and the Mobility Privileges of locals	54
5.1.1	Smuggling and Surveillance Practices	58
5.2	Insecurities and Reluctant Co-habitation.....	60
5.3	Summary of the Inferences	63
Chapter 6:	Border Sufferings and Politics of Morality.....	64
6.1	Border Sufferings.....	64
6.1.1	Daily Witnessing of Border Sufferings and Moral Obligation to Help .	66
6.1.2	Blaming “the Other Side”	68
6.2	The Hero and the Criminal: Rivalry for the Moral Ground.....	73
6.3	Summary of the Inferences	76
Chapter 7:	Conclusion	77
Bibliography		80
Appendix A:	Interview Questions	92

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Delimitation Committee Map of Greece-Türkiye border	6
Figure 2.2: Ferres and Peplos Cross-sections.....	8
Figure 4.1: Overall Research Design Diagram.....	44
Figure 5.1: Diagram showing the main mobility patterns at the border.....	55
Figure 5.2: Military Prohibited Zone Identification Card.....	58

ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
IBM	Integrated Border Management
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope and Delimitations

The Greece-Türkiye land border underwent a considerable change in the last two decades. The border infrastructure regulating human mobility has developed extensively with kilometers of walls and high-technology watchtowers. Yet, the cross-border cooperation that catered for this development got interrupted by an abrupt incident in 2020 when Turkish authorities announced that they will not prevent crossings (“Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: 18 Bin Düzensiz Göçmen Sınırı Geçti, Kapıları Kapatmayacağız,” 2020). Thousands of migrants gathered near the border in anticipation of crossing to Greece and camped there for weeks. Greek and European officials responded with use of force to prevent crossings. Named after the region it occurred, the Edirne Events gave rise to a new border regime in which migrant crossings are not prevented by Türkiye and are thwarted violently by Greece. This new regime renders the border a *sui generis* case within the scope of the European border regime with Türkiye being the first country to strongly antagonize the European Union’s mobility control in the area. Since the dissidence by Türkiye is in the form of de-regulation that set a loose mobility control, there exists a broad institutional lacuna filled with everyday practices and discourses. Therefore, an analysis of these practices and discourses is essential for the discovery of theoretical and empirical contributions of this unique case. This thesis responds to this need and analyzes the Turkish borderland residents’ daily practices and discourses sustaining the Greece-Türkiye land border.

The findings indicate that the mobility patterns and ownership regimes in the area and the moral narratives justifying locals’ practices are inherent elements of the border and that the sudden change in the structural features of the border transformed these features of everyday life. Locals benefit from the economic opportunities of the smuggling industry and their economic and humanitarian endeavors enable migrants to travel in a landscape unfamiliar to them. The Edirne Events increased the number of people benefiting from the smuggling industry and transformed the perception of smuggling practices. On the other hand, the events also increased the feeling of insecurity and forced a form of co-habitation onto locals in which they unwillingly share their

private and common spaces with migrants. With the Edirne Events, the opportunities and insecurities are reframed in a moral narrative that positions locals as moral border workers who justify their actions through representations of migrants' sufferings. Locals' discourses generating categories of "others" are by and large in rapport with this moral framework.

Previous studies have attempted to theoretically evaluate the border through in-depth interviews with authorities and migrants (Topak, 2014), analyze humanitarian practices through fieldwork involving border workers (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015), theorize the Edirne Events as a turning point for the border regime through secondary sources and discourse analysis on textual material (Teunissen and Koutrolikou, 2022; Iscan, 2021), compare the discourses on Edirne Events in news articles (Yaşar, 2020), and analyze foreign policy strategies of Greece and Türkiye during the events (Hüseyinoğlu and Utku, 2021). Yet, there are no studies conveying the perspectives of the locals and analyzing everyday border(ing)s. Considering the feeling of urgency and care that had been registered by Edirne Events, the lack of perspective and content is a considerable one that requires attention. This study promises to fill this gap.

The everyday perspective provides an alternative narrative that complements, and at times competes with, the conventional territorial narrative of the border by means of demonstrating the day-to-day practices and discourses that regulate and deregulate mobility. The border studies literature indicates that the borders are produced by individuals and communities as much as they are a product of territorial state-making. This theoretical perspective change is referred to as the "vernacularization of border studies" (Rumford, 2013). According to this theoretical stance, any account that privileges the state as an actor in border-making falls short of understanding the bordering processes in their full scope. In this regard, the everyday experience of the border is necessary for a valid analysis. In addition, compared to other individuals and groups who take part in bordering and de-bordering practices, for instance, irregular migrants who cross the border, locals' perspectives provide an opportunity for temporal comparison as they are sustained witnesses and actors of bordering and de-bordering processes. These characteristics of locals illuminate how the border is sustained, contested, and negotiated in the everyday life and what kind of a role it plays in shaping the identities of people partaking in these processes.

To bring forth the everyday perspectives and everyday experiences of the border, this study follows the borderscaping approach. The borderscaping approach provides a

distinct spatiotemporal framework through which issues of (im)mobility and (in)security can be analyzed with a vernacular perspective. Under this theoretical framework, borders are understood as multi-perspectival, multiscale, and complex phenomena that are diffused and mobile throughout society, i.e. beyond the territorial defining lines. Therefore, it should be noted that providing an exhaustive and broad analysis of the Greece-Türkiye border is not the aim of this study. This study acknowledges the multi-perspectival and multiscale nature of borders and aims at providing a focused account of the Turkish borderland residents' experiences and perspectives of the border and tries to close the gap between the dominant narratives of the border and the lived experience by presenting locals' daily practices and discourses in addition to general features of the border. It combines ethnographic research that took place between 2020 and 2022 with research on secondary sources such as newspaper articles, relevant political agreements, and institutional directives for that matter.

The multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork is conducted in three rural settlements located next to the border. As a local, my acquaintance with the region served me greatly in during the research period. I grow up in a village near the Greece border and my boarding high school was situated within ten minutes walking distance to the Pazarkule border gate. So, I had the opportunity to experience and observe the course of events for the last decade. We often encountered migrants or their traces on their way to the border, sometimes lost, sometimes intercepted by officials. It was not seldom to come across Greek and Bulgarian tourists shopping in the city center or witness on the bus ride from the city center migrants being confronted by officials, who quickly peered around the bus to detect "foreign-looking" people. I could also observe the material changes in the border. For instance, in my second year in high school, I could watch the border wall construction from my dorm window. This experience is the main reason why I conducted this research, and it also helped me a lot in the fieldwork since I knew the region and the people. Yet, the partial overlap between my identity and those of the research subjects imperiled the objectivity of the research. To tackle this problem, I engaged in a repetitive process of introspective reflection parallel to the research. As I analyzed the findings, I paid attention to these reflections to tackle my underlying biases and subjective perspective and to increase the validity of this research.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

The Introduction to the Case and Background Information chapter that follows this specifies the scope of this thesis by presenting the case. It provides a historical account of the delimitation of the border to situate the abrupt change in the border regime as a turning point. Then, it explains the current demographic conditions and the increasing migratory pressure to the border and, the recent institutional and infrastructural changes responding to that pressure. Lastly, it will briefly describe the circumstances during the course of the Edirne Events.

The Literature Review conveys the main ontological, epistemological, and methodological debates that have emerged in the development of border studies in order to present and define the concepts used in this study. It focuses on the borderscaping approach among a variety of approaches. After the critiques of the borderscaping approach are stated, the theoretical measures to tackle those problems are explained.

The methodology chapter explains the research design applied in the fieldwork in detail. It accounts for the operationalization and its shortcomings, the sampling, and the representativeness of the results. Lastly, it problematizes the objectivity in social science research and the researcher's background as a local to discuss the biases of the study and explain the method followed in this study to reveal and tackle the underlying prejudices of the researcher.

The findings of the study are analyzed in two chapters. "Life in Constant Flux: Patterns of Mobility on the Crossroads of Opportunities and Insecurities" analyzes the mobility patterns and ownership regimes at the border and how they influence locals' everyday lives. The following chapter, Border Sufferings and Politics of Morality evaluates how these practices have reverberated in the discourses of locals. It analyzes the overlap of moral discourse with the categories of "otherness."

The conclusion chapter explains the significance of the research and summarizes its findings. In addition, an overview of the study is provided to explain its shortcomings and several areas where more research is needed.

Chapter 2:

**INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE AND BACKGROUND
INFORMATION**

Contrary to the disputed Aegean border between Greece and Türkiye, the land border between them is a consolidated one with no considerable adjustments other than those minor changes caused by the erosion and sedimentation of the Evros River since its delineation in 1923. Nevertheless, the border's governance and the resulting permeability characteristics have been undergoing a radical change for the last two decades. This chapter provides information regarding the history and current state of the border region. It is within this context that, firstly, the delineation of the land border and the preceding discussions at the Lausanne Conference will be briefly summarized. Then, the demographic characteristics of the borderland region will be presented. Lastly, the migratory flows through the land border will be evaluated within the context of Greece-Türkiye cross-border cooperation and a summary of the 2020 Edirne Events will be presented as a turning point for the sustenance of the cross-border cooperation.

2.1 *Delineation of the Border and the Following Transformations*

The land border between Greece and Türkiye follows the course of the Meriç River, except for the part in Karaağaç, where the river flows into the Turkish territory (Figure 2.1). The outline of the border between Greece and Türkiye was established by the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923. During the Lausanne Peace Talks preceding the treaty, the Turkish delegation demanded that the Eastern Thrace border be drawn in line with the Istanbul Agreement signed in 1913 and that the decision regarding Western Thrace's situation is conferred to the popular vote. The Turkish delegation requested Karaağaç to be included in the borders of the country due to its close location to Edirne and the railway station that connected the city to Istanbul on the east and Paris to the west (Karacan, 2009). In the second phase of the talks, the Greek delegation proposed to draw the border on the left bank of the Evros river, except for the part in Karaağaç where the river flows into Turkish territory. However, the Turkish side argued that drawing the border on the left bank of the river would create problems regarding the sharing of water resources and proposed the thalweg line instead. The thalweg line was accepted as the border

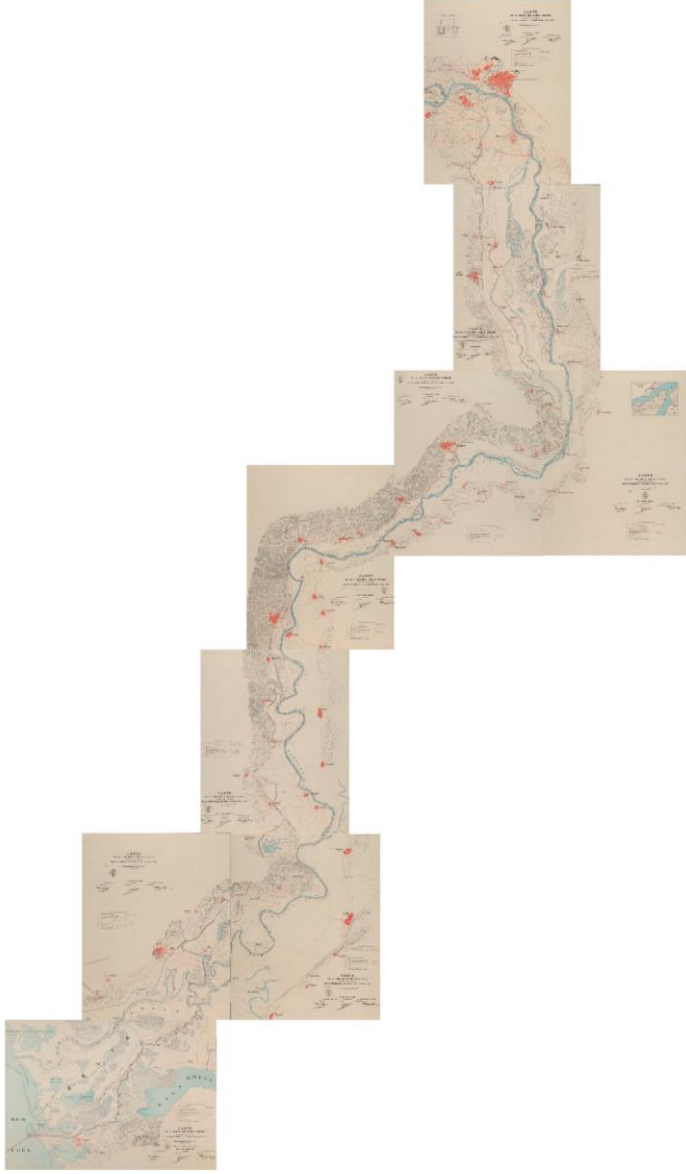


Figure 2.1: Map of the Greece-Türkiye border as drawn by the Delimitation Committee.
Note. Map sheets are combined by the dissertator. From the “Turkish Greek Relations” website” by Fuat Aksu (<http://www.turkishgreek.org/index.php/kuetuephane/indirilebilir-kaynaklar/category/19-1926-turkey-greece-boundary-agreement>) Copyright © 2022. Türk-Yunan İlişkileri Forumu.

line. However, the authority to draw the exact map and to decide whether the border would change as the thalweg line did was delegated to the Delimitation Committee. Figure 2.1 displays the original map that was drawn by the committee presided over by Dutch Colonel F.J. Backer.

Although there have been no considerable political alterations made to the border since then, there have been minor changes due to river reclamation projects and the natural cycles of the river that constitutes a significant portion of the border. The history of modern river reclamation projects dates back to Tanzimat Era when Ottoman authorities brought in the first dredgers and technicians from France and England to increase the navigability of the river and decrease the risk of flooding. This project was the first of its kind in the Ottoman Empire, and the data collected from this project were used in the other rivers of the empire later (Çoruh, 2018). During the first decade of the Turkish Republic, embankment projects to prevent floodwater were carried on around Karaağaç and neighboring Bosna Village. The first instance of cooperation between two riparian countries also occurred in this period. In 1934, Greece and Türkiye signed “The Agreement Pertaining to the Construction of Hydraulic Facilities on Both Banks of the Meric-Evros River” (Tombul, 2014). As the floods continued to be a source of significant economic loss on both sides of the river, Greece and Türkiye embarked upon a modern reclamation project that involved an inspection process by an American company named Harza (Schellig & Kramer, 2011). The two countries signed another agreement in 1963, according to the information provided by the inspection process undertaken by Harza company. The agreement, namely “Protocol on the Improvements of the River Meric Watercourse That Constitutes a Significant Portion of the Turkish-Greek Border,” set forth the necessary embankment and related hydraulic infrastructures. Short-cut channels, as indicated in Harza Project, were dug in areas where the river is meandering to increase the discharge velocity. These short-cut channels in Enez, Ferres, and Peplos took the place of the main channel (Figure 2.2). The authorities planned that the areas that fell between the old main channel of the river and the new channels would be exchanged. However, that part of the plan was not realized due to strained relations caused by the Cyprus conflict (Schellig & Kramer, 2011). Today these intersections transform into islets in winter, and the old riverbed dries out in the summertime, resulting in passages easy to cross by walking. According to statements by locals, crowded migrant groups crossed the border from these areas during the height of the Edirne Events.

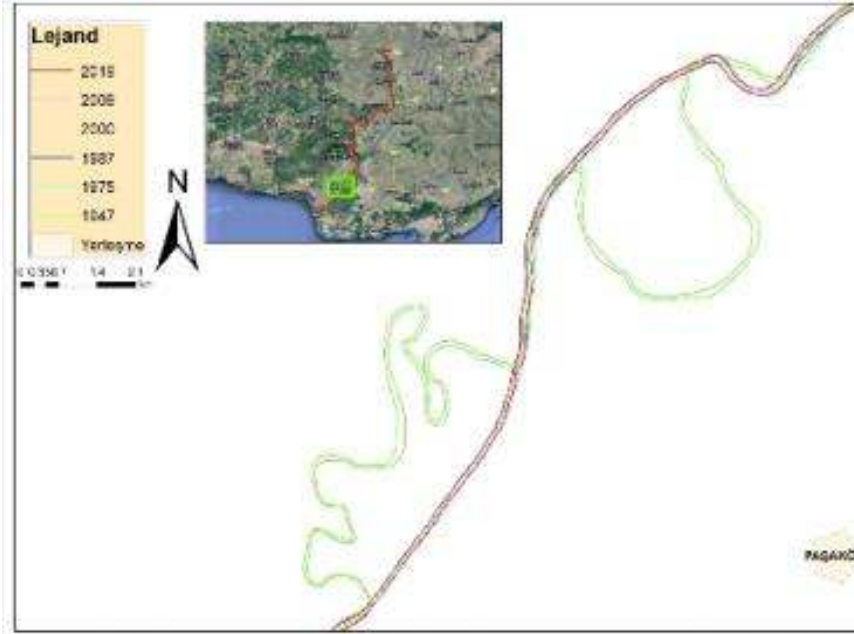


Figure 2.2 Ferres and Peplos Cross-sections. The green line indicates the previous channel which constitutes the border. From Türkmenoğlu (2020). Meriç Nehri'nin Edirne Bölümünde 1947-2019 Periyodundaki Yatak Değişimlerinin CBS ve UA Teknikleri ile Analizi. Jeomorfolojik Araştırmalar Dergisi, (4), 32-41.

2.2 Demography of the Region with a Historical Perspective

As a result of its position on the international migration routes, the region draws a complicated picture regarding its demographic structure. The border region has witnessed many movements in the last two centuries, most of which impacted the demography of the borderland. To account for the current demographic situation in the region, these historical mass movements, as well as recent trends, will be analyzed in this section. Although the study at hand focuses on the Turkish settlements neighboring the border in particular, the existing studies and statistics provide province and country-level data. Moreover, the multilevel and ever-changing nature of migration adds to the complexity of the picture. Therefore, this section uses a variety of secondary sources and ethnographic data to provide an overall description of the demographic characteristics of the Turkish part of the Greece-Türkiye borderland.

2.2.1 Nation-Building and Population Exchanges

The first set of events that played a significant role in shaping regional demography in the 19th century resulted from emerging Balkan nationalism. As the nationalist movements shaped the new political borders, they also shaped the demography of the resulting new states. The immigration flows following the Crimean War, and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 (War of 93' as known in the region) had such an impact on the demography of the Edirne region and resulted in the establishment of several villages in the border region. Although these migratory movements are older than a century, their descendants still refer to those movements when they are narrating the establishment of their villages or their family histories. They also provide a categorization among the residents of units of settlements through which their spatial relations are shaped. In most of the villages with mixed migratory backgrounds, the groups with similar emigration places live in closer proximity dividing villages into neighborhoods. Some of the neighborhoods are informally named after their composition such as *Pomak mahalle* [Pomak neighborhood] or *Gacal mahalle* [Gajal neighborhood].

However, it was not possible to give a complete account of the origins and demography of these villages since there are no studies inclusive of all the villages of Edirne province, and the last census data that includes questions investigating the spoken language dates to 1965. The sufficiency of the spoken language as an indicator of ethnicity is also questionable. Currently, the largest group of minority language speaker is the Pomak community. Moreover, with regard to the establishment of the settlements, some of the border villages were formed over existing farmsteads which further complicates distinguishing a founding date. However, the aggregate data indicates that a considerable number of people migrated to the region in the second half of the 19th century as a result of the ongoing wars. According to official sources, 2,445 people were transferred from Crimea to the Edirne region by 1861 (Demirtaş, 2009). The following decades witnessed larger inflows. Another official document dating to 1893 indicates that 171,057 people were settled in Edirne during the period following Russo-Turkish War (Demirtaş, 2009).

According to the 1831 Ottoman census, in which only the taxable male population was counted, more than two-thirds of the Edirne Sanjak were Christian and Jewish (Göktepe, 2019). Some of the subregions of Edirne Sanjak later fell under Greek and Bulgarian administration and as a result, its population count decreased. On the other

hand, immigration to the region increased the Muslim population. According to the 1881/1882-1893 census, the Muslim percentage within the population has slightly increased to one-half (Göktepe, 2019). However, the changing administrative structure and the spurious nature of the 1831 census render the comparison between the two a troubled one.

The first quarter of the 20th century demonstrates a dense and busy picture of population movements. Following the Balkan Wars that stirred up the populations in the region and transformed the borders several times, the Treaty of Istanbul was signed in 1913 between the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. At the time, the Kingdom of Bulgaria had invaded Eastern Thracia, and therefore Ottoman Empire had no land border with Greece. The annexed protocol of the Treaty of Istanbul stipulated the exchange of Bulgarian and Muslim populations residing within the 15km distance to the border on both sides. Although the idea of population exchange dates to the last quarter of the 20th century (Önder & Acarlioğlu, 2017) the protocol was the first agreement regulating the population exchange between two states (Özlem, 2019).

State-led population exchange and other forms of forced migration continued in the early Republican era. Both Greece and Türkiye instrumentalized the exchange of populations or ethnic cleansing in the form of forced migration in their search for homogeneity and nation-building efforts. Such that one of the first decisions that were taken in Lausanne was on the exchange of populations between Türkiye and Greece. The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Populations, signed on 30 January 1923, stipulated the forceful migration of around 700,000 people between Türkiye and Greece (Yıldırım, 2006). The groups whose forceful migration was stipulated were decided according to religious affiliations. Greek orthodox population living in Türkiye and the Muslim population living in Greece were designated for migration regardless of their mother tongue. Greeks living in Istanbul and Muslims living in Western Thrace were kept exempt from the agreement. Today ethnic Turks and Muslim Pomaks still populate Western Thrace.

Apart from the state-led population exchanges, successive attacks on the Jewish and Christian populations in Thrace were significant events for the border region's demography. Thrace pogroms of 1934 occurred in all provinces of the Thracian region. Following the Resettlement Law of 1934, which aimed for linguistic and religious homogeneity in the country, the antisemitism discourse got strengthened. The Jewish

population was subjected to verbal and physical assault by their fellow citizens. Although the state intervened in the attacks and re-established order, new evidence suggests the state also played a role in the ignition of attacks through facultative nonaction and unofficial pressure by authorized persons (Bayraktar, 2006). As a result, the non-Muslim population incrementally emigrated from the region.

It should be noted that the migration to the border region in this period was not only from abroad but there were also examples of internal migration. During the nation-building process, some Kurdish tribes were displaced from Eastern provinces to Western provinces. Anecdotal evidence I collected during my excursions suggests that the Çataltepe village of Enez County was established as a result of such forced migration from Ağrı province in 1930. Moreover, İpsala county also hosts a Kurdish population that migrated from Tunceli province. During the interviews, there were no instances of pronounced ethnic background information on Kurdish locals and the fieldwork did not include settlements with primarily Kurdish residents. This lack is a significant one since a comparison between Kurdish migrants and Balkan migrants could provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between state-making and state-bordering. However, adding such an extensive dimension would extend the coverage of the thesis to an unmanageable breadth since there is no previous research on neither group's relationship to border, both of whom have utterly different histories and relationships with the state.

The following periods witnessed population flows to the Edirne region mainly from Bulgaria, especially after the foundation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Ahmet İçduygu and Deniz Sert categorize these flows into three periods. The first period is between 1950 and 1953 and concerns the permission given to 250,000 ethnic Turks in Bulgaria. The second period started with the family reunification agreement between the two countries in 1968. The third period concerns the assimilation policies imposed upon ethnic Turks and the conducive flows in 1989 (İçduygu & Sert, 2015). The refugees were resettled in various cities of Türkiye, among which Edirne hosted a considerable population (Kostanick, 1955). These flows also involved Roma migrants. However, it should be noted that during the 1950-51 migration, Roma people, most of whom were Muslims, were not allowed to migrate or transit through Türkiye on the grounds that they are not of "Turkish origin" and were put to detention in a military hospital until they were repatriated (Pınar, 2017).

2.2.2 *Internal Migration in the 21st Century*

The rural-urban migration is another factor that shapes the demography of the region. With the development of industrial centers in Türkiye, landless farmers and the unemployed started migrating to these areas to provide the necessary workforce. Whereas the rural population of Edirne decreased from 194.178 in 1990 to 171.698 in 2000, the urban population has increased from 210.421 to 230.908 (Edirne Provincial Population and Citizenship Directorate website, accessed 22 September 2021). Today this trend continues all around Türkiye, with younger generations preferring urban cities more and more to access educational opportunities, employment, and a liberal environment. Industrial centers such as Çorlu or metropolitan areas such as Istanbul are migrant-receiving urban areas in the region. Although Edirne city cannot be considered a populous industrial center, it hosts both foreign students from the Balkans and also Türkiye. In addition to education and employment opportunities, public services jobs induce population mobility from within the country as well.

2.2.3 *International Migration and Transit Migration in the 21st Century*

Starting from the end of the 1970s, several events in the neighborhood of Türkiye stirred up demographic movements. These population flows were directed to a degree to Türkiye as a result of its changing “position within the international migration systems.” These flows also cover the transit migration to Europe through Türkiye (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012, p.20) Although Edirne does not host a considerable refugee community, its location near the border renders it a frequent destination for migrants (Yalçın, 2021). In addition, there is a removal center in Edirne city center and another one in Pehlivan köyü, a township in the Kırklareli region situated near the Greek border.

The first one of these events is the Iranian Revolution which induced political asylum seekers. These migrants mostly resided in Türkiye for a short period of time before continuing to Europe (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012). Similarly, the 1980s also witnessed major political events that caused refugee flows to Türkiye. Due to the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War, nearly 500,000 Iraqis sought shelter in Türkiye (Danış, 2011). The ethnic homogenization policy of Bulgaria forced many ethnic Turks and other Muslim ethnic groups to migrate to Türkiye in 1989. The end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s is a significant period in the history of irregular migration in

Türkiye as it denotes the first instance of mass irregular migration and also the beginning of “shuttle migration” from post-Soviet countries (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012).

The 21st century witnessed two major events in Afghanistan and Syria that rendered these countries major countries of origin. Firstly, the War in Afghanistan that started in 2001 maintained the country’s top position in the source of refugees list. Although the majority of Afghan refugees reside in neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan, Türkiye and Europe also became preferred destinations after the 1990s, when Taliban was established and took control of Kabul. The number of Afghan irregular migrants increased again following the American military intervention. The insecure and unstable environment following the American intervention yet became another significant push factor for the current displacements in the first decade of the 21st century. In a similar vein, the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan and the ensuing takeover by the Taliban in 2020 increased the number of Afghan asylum seekers in Türkiye. Secondly, the Syrian Civil War that started in 2011 stirred the country harshly and the majority of Syrian emigrants took shelter in Türkiye, and many continued their way to Europe through Türkiye and other destinations as well.

The first half of the second decade of the 21st century is remarkable in two ways. Firstly, Syrian refugees created an unprecedented mass movement. This movement was perceived as a “crisis” by the EU authorities. Secondly, the high volume of transit migration through Türkiye brought about increased policing and the building of infrastructures such as border fences and border walls on the Greece-Türkiye border and eastern borders of Türkiye alike.

2.3 Border Security and Cross-Border Cooperation

Although the fall of the Berlin Wall has ignited a feeling of freedom in a borderless world, the external borders of Europe have been walled up since the beginning of the 1990s. Following the fashion of the fencing of Ceuta and Melilla exclaves of Spain during the 1990s and the much-discussed clashes between the Spanish police forces and refugees over the border that caused the death of many, the eastern borders of the EU are also being walled up in the last decade. However, these border barriers are mostly national initiatives, and the EU’s common border management policy remains more intricate and relatively more ethically justifiable. Nevertheless, the EU’s approach primarily depends

on these hard borders as they obstruct irregular migration and enable the EU to process and accommodate asylum and immigration claims in a controlled manner.

With the Schengen Agreement, all the internal border controls of the Schengen Area were terminated, and the external border controls were started to be coordinated in line with the agreement. With the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Schengen acquis was integrated into the EU framework. Therefore, the Treaty of Amsterdam constitutes a milestone for the management of external borders and migration. With the ratification of the treaty in 1999, the third pillar of the EU, Justice and Home Affairs brought under greater control of the EU institutions and harmonized the national policies. The special EU Summit at Tampere in 1999 focused on creating an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. The management of borders and migration is considered within this area of legislation. In line with the new framework, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) was founded in 2004.

The following period witnessed the emergence of the concept of Integrated Border Management (IBM). The origins of the concept reside in the risk analysis pursuit of Frontex and the related institution-building efforts that cater to a cooperative framework for migration and border management. IBM can be regarded as an integrated solution to interlinked problems of border and migration management, and it involves intra-service, inter-agency, and international cooperation. Therefore, it includes not only European and national institutions but also neighboring countries and international institutions. Considering that the accession of Türkiye coincides with the same period, cooperation between these two polities constitutes a significant place in their respective border management policies. Since Türkiye's candidate status for full membership was officially recognized in 1999, the same year when the Treaty of Amsterdam was ratified, Area of Freedom, Security and Justice constituted a significant portion of the accession proceedings. According to Kemal Kirişçi, the numerousness of harmonization projects concerning the area of freedom, security and justice indicates the importance of this area both from the European Commission's and Türkiye's perspectives (Kirisici, 2007).

One of the first harmonization efforts by the Turkish government was the establishment of the Task Force on Asylum, Migration and Border Protection in 2002. The task force focused on border protection issues, asylum, and the Schengen visa regime. It "consists of representatives from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Land Forces Command, the General Command of Gendarmerie, the Coast

Guard, the Undersecretary of Customs, and the Secretariat General for European Union Affairs” (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012). As a result of the one-year study process, which included study visits to the borders, The Strategy Paper for the Protection of External Borders was issued in 2003.

The majority of the harmonization process is conducted through twinning projects that include visits to observe best practices and administrative assistance. The first twinning project regarding border management was titled "Support for the development of an Action Plan to implement Türkiye's integrated border management strategy" (Kirisci, 2007). The project was conducted under the Ministry of Interior by a consortium that includes the UK as the junior and France as the leader partners. As an output of the project, the "National Action Plan towards Implementation of Türkiye's Integrated Border Management Strategy" was composed and adopted in 2006.

In line with the increasing cooperation between the EU and Türkiye, Greece and Türkiye also underwent close cooperation in border security and migration management. In 2000, the foreign ministers of two countries signed the "Cooperation Agreement Against Crimes Particularly Terrorism, Organized Crimes, Drug Trafficking, and Illegal Migration." The document was ratified the following year. By the end of that same year, a protocol was signed on the readmission of "illegally" entering citizens or third-country nationals. However, the agreement is not considered a successful one (Baldwin-Edwards, 2017). Kemal Kirişçi indicates that the Turkish authorities' perception that they are not evaluated equally with the other candidates and also the absence of burden sharing are the major sources of distrust impeding the working of the agreement (Kirisci, 2004).

The institution-building and cooperation efforts that accelerated at the beginning of the decade paved the way to capacity-increasing efforts to tackle the increasing flow of irregular migration between Greece and Türkiye. Following Greece's request for help in the policing of its borders, Joint Operation Poseidon started in 2006. The operation included coast guard and border patrol support from Frontex to assist Greek border management. The scope of the operation increased in 2011 as a response to already increasing irregular flows. In the same year, Greece started the construction of a border fence along the part of the border where the border line does not overlap with the Evros River, near the Karaağaç District of Edirne.

The construction of the fence was regarded as "pointless" by the European Commission ("EU Refuses to Fund 'pointless' Greece-Türkiye Border Fence," 2012) and

Greece's request for funding was refused. Nevertheless, Midas Project Report from 2014 indicates that "Greece's irregular migration control practices are in many respects the direct product of the EU's common policy approach" (Angeli et al., 2014, p.21). Moreover, Greece's asylum and migration management costs were primarily funded by external sponsors, among which the European Commission's SOLID Framework has the biggest share. The report also indicates that in the period of 2008-2014, a minimum of half a billion euros were spent on the management of irregular migration, "out of which around 15% was allocated to the asylum system, 30% in return policies and 55% in external border management" (Angeli et al., 2014, p.25).

As a supplement to the Evros border fence, the Greek government started Operation Aspida on the Evros land border. Aspida translates to shield and resonates with the idea that Greece constitutes the shield of Europe in the face of "illegal" migration flows. Within the scope of the project, police officers were deployed on the border. As the urban counterpart of Aspida, Operation Xenios Zeus was also initiated in 2012. The project aimed to control irregular migration and increase security in cities. However, the means of the project took serious criticism as police undertook several sweeps and forcibly took more than 85,000 thousand foreigners to police stations to check whether their stay in the country was illegal. However, it was revealed that only a small percentage of that number entered the country irregularly, which shows the extent of "ethnic profiling and arbitrary deprivation of liberty" (Cossé, 2013).

The Frontex efforts were increased in the following years, and its mandate was extended in 2015. However, the upsurge in irregular arrivals continued in the following year. The following year also witnessed the EU-Türkiye Deal for the management of irregular migration which required stricter border controls on Türkiye's part. Following the deal, irregular migration significantly dropped. Yet, Türkiye has expected political and economic gains in return for stricter border controls. This included visa liberalization and speeding up Türkiye's accession to the EU. However, Türkiye was left dissatisfied with its expectations. In addition, the Syrian War was continuing to be a push factor for refugees. Türkiye's policy was to create a safe zone near its borders to host refugees. Therefore, collecting EU support for its Syria policy and increasing European funding for migration management can be considered Türkiye's two main goals in the second half of the 2010s. The Edirne Events that took place in early 2020 can be evaluated within this framework since the decision to open the border followed right after Türkiye's casualties

in Syria. Moreover, it also constitutes a turning point in the course of cross-border cooperation. The next section will evaluate the events in detail.

2.3.1 Edirne Events as a Turning Point for Border Management

During the period of close cooperation and integration in border management, Türkiye frequently uttered its discontent with the asymmetric nature of the relationship and blamed the EU for not fulfilling its responsibilities. Türkiye also expected cooperation in the Syrian Civil War to resolve the most pressing push factor for the Syrian migrants and to end the instability in the region. However, these two polities differed in their approach to the Syrian Civil War and Türkiye could not find the ally it sought. Following the death of 36 Turkish soldiers in Idlib, the president of Türkiye demonstrated his dissatisfaction with the current status quo by announcing his decision to open the European borders to international migrants. Shortly after the announcement, many flocked to the border, creating a humanitarian crisis in the Edirne region.

On 27 February 2020, Russian-backed Syrian Government Forces in northwest Syria struck the Turkish Armed Forces causing the greatest number of losses by Türkiye since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War. Shortly after the attack, which was organized in about the evening, an anonymous Turkish high post official stated to Reuters that “All refugees, including Syrians, are now welcome to cross into the European Union” (Evans & Coskun, 2020). The news was circulated in the Turkish broadcasting agencies shortly after with footage of refugees on their way to the Greece-Türkiye land border. Footages indicate that migrants reached the Edirne border as early as 03:00 am on 28 February (“Türkiye Göçmenlere Avrupa Kapılarını Açtı,” 2020). The following days witnessed an increasing number of migrants coming to Edirne and Aegean coasts from other cities of Türkiye by buses and taxis. Moreover, an agency reported that the refugees staying at the pre-removal detention center in Aydın left the center on the same night by bus to cross the border (“Türkiye Sınırlarını Açtı; Mülteciler Sınırlara Akın Ediyor,” 2020). Ayşen Üstübcü and Sibel Karadağ also quote their interlocutors who work at NGOs that “removal centers were emptied” and “they [authorities] did not bring all of them by themselves but directed” (Üstübcü & Karadağ, 2020, 9.14). The official announcement by the president came after two days on 29 February. The president stated that by the morning of 29 February the numbers reached 18 thousand. In the same speech, the president indicated the EU’s failure in fulfilling its promises and the isolation of Türkiye

in Syria as the reasons for the decision and stated that the borders will continue to be open in the following period (“Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Kapıları Açtık Bundan Sonraki Süreçte de Kapatmayacağız,” 2020).

According to Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu, 76,358 refugees left Edirne by the morning of March 1st. Whereas the Greek prime minister Mitsotakis stated that Greece prevented the crossing of 10,000 refugees in 24 hours. On the same day, Greece took a decision to suspend the asylum rights of those refugees irregularly entering the country and to deport them back (“Greece Suspends Asylum Applications as Migrants Seek to Leave Turkey,” 2020; “Greece/EU: Allow New Arrivals to Claim Asylum,” 2020). With the increasing number of arrivals and the increased security measures by Greece, many got stuck at the border and the number of those who gathered at the border increased to at least 13 thousand by 1 March (IOM, 2020). The migrants gathered both at the formal crossing points of Pazarkule and İpsala border gates and the rest of the border. The number of migrants near the Pazarkule border gate, which is situated close to Edirne city center has reached 4,000 (Pirinççi et al., 2020). The hostile climate conditions created the need for more assistance.

Moreover, with the spread of COVID-19, people gathered at the border faced yet another risk. Considering the various problems stateless people face in accessing healthcare services, the migrants at the border also faced similar drawbacks. Üstübcü and Karadağ state that “access to primary health services was the major issue in the border region together with lack of access to food, clean water, basic medical needs and ambulance” (Üstübcü & Karadağ, 2020, p.23). Although there is no data regarding the cases at the border as no COVID-19 tests were applied, the Pazarkule area was emptied as part of COVID-19 precaution measures at the end of March (Bitti, 2020). Although the voluntary transfer of people to Istanbul began two weeks before that, the transfers at the end of March were forced and included the evacuation of tents (Üstübcü & Karadağ, 2020). The migrants waiting near the border gate were transferred to removal centers and dormitories. However, human mobility and gatherings continued at the other parts of the border and there are still migrants coming from other parts of Türkiye to cross the border.

In accordance with the Law of Restricted Military Zones and Security Zones no: 2565, the entrance to the first-degree land restricted zones is prohibited except for duty holders and other Turkish duty holders permitted by the competent command-post authorities. This law is being enforced more and more strictly for the last two decades.

Therefore, the entrance of civilians to the border region was restricted during the events. In several border areas, villages and some parts of agricultural fields were separated from the dead zone with earth levees and the relevant border infrastructure such as watchtowers, car patrols, and identity checks through the biometric database and thermographic camera. However, some villages are situated at almost no distance from the river. Moreover, as the river valley constitutes valuable agricultural soil and the river itself provides water and fish stock, the permitted settlers commute to the dead zone daily during the agricultural season. The existence of several settlements and agricultural fields in the first and second-degree military zones indicates that there were locals witnessing the events in addition to permitted NGO workers and journalists.

Although Greece was criticized repetitively regarding the mistreatment of refugees and illegal pushbacks both at the sea and the land borders, its response to the abrupt events at the border was nevertheless violent. The harshest response was given at Pazarkule and İpsala border gates. The Greek police forces used tear gas and sound bombs extensively to curb the crossing of the migrants. Migrants repetitively tried to cross the razor wire and barricade protected gates, but they could not succeed. Therefore, the irregular crossings over the Evros River and mass crossings over the Ferres intersection constitute the majority of successful crossings.

On the 3rd of March, Minister of Interior Affairs Süleyman Soylu announced that Türkiye will employ a thousand policemen from the Special Operation Department at the Evros border to prevent the illegal pushback practices directed toward refugees. In his announcement, he also criticized Greece's treatment of refugees which, he indicates, involves stripping and robbing migrants before sending them back to Türkiye ("İçişleri Bakanı Soylu: Geri İtmeleri Engellemek İçin Meriç Sınırına Bin Özel Harekat Polisi Getireceğiz," 2020). In these parts of the river, Turkish security personnel was directing and protecting the refugees from illegal pushbacks by the Greek side. Locals also played a significant role. Locals who know the area directed groups of hundreds and enabled their crossings to the Greek side. However, Muhammad Gulzar, a Pakistani refugee was shot dead at the Pazarkule border gate and Muhammad al-Arab, a Syrian refugee, was shot dead at the western side of the river near İpsala (*The Killing of Muhammad Al-Arab*, 2020; *The Killing of Muhammad Gulzar*, 2020).

It should be noted that many journalists indicated that their entry into the camping sites and near the border was blocked similar to the prohibition on the Greek side. Yet, news

agencies known for their proximity to the government could report from the area. Moreover, the Turkish government actively documented the mistreatment of refugees by Greece such that the event took the form of a social media war fought through criticisms. Whereas Türkiye focused on the humanitarian crimes committed against refugees as documented by international NGOs, Greece mostly denounced them as fake news and Frontex denied its position as complicit in the crimes (Fallon, 2020). The main criticism against Türkiye was that it was weaponizing refugees for its own benefit (Gadalla, 2020). Similarly, Bulgaria was also accused of weaponizing the Evros River by opening floodgates to flood the river on the 9th of March (Kokkinidis, 2020). However, Bulgaria refuted the allegations that it received a request from Greece to open the floodgates.

Evaluating Edirne Events as an emotional and irrational response by the Turkish authorities that have long been under great pressure in hosting the world's greatest refugee population falls short of explaining the underlying realpolitik. Sibel Karadağ uses the term "floodgate" to refer to Türkiye's utilization of its position in the regional demographic networks in relation to the EU (Karadağ, 2022). Considering that the events created a border spectacle that carried the underlying tensions to the sight of the international public, it acted as a ground for Türkiye to gain moral ground concerning the migrants' rights. As Türkiye has long been under pressure by the EU to adjust its migration laws in accordance with the EU *acquis*, the demonstration of the EU's inadequacy in complying with Human Rights and European moral standards created a broader reach for Türkiye in negotiations. Moreover, it rid Türkiye of its heavy responsibility in "regulating" the migration flows into the EU. This game of morality and diplomacy that employ migrants as negotiation chips can be considered as a constituting block of the Greece-Türkiye border regime and the thesis evaluates everyday practices and discourses in this framework.

Chapter 3:

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Following the proliferation of borders in the empirical reality, the border studies literature underwent a renaissance in which both the interest and theoretical novelties mounted up. However, this heightened involvement in borders demonstrates a complex, overlapping, and often ambiguous structure in which the literature is advancing. One reason for this non-linear development of the literature is the interdisciplinary nature of border studies. Another reason is indicated as the lack of communication among scholars (Krichker, 2021). Therefore, it is a top priority to comment on the broader discussions regarding the literature and develop a structure to summarize the current state of affairs of the border studies. This section responds to this priority by providing a historical account of the development of the literature and summarizing current theoretical approaches under the thematical questions of “What is a border?” “Who borders?” and “Where are the borders?” The categorization under these thematic questions is highly necessary because of the non-linear and fragmented nature of the literature. The thematic categorization also enables the interrogation of onto-epistemological questions which are positioned at the heart of the literature. The last section focuses on the “borderscaping” approach, which is employed in this thesis, and assesses whether the borderscaping approach responds to current theoretical exigencies. As a criticism of the “borderscape” concept, it discusses the ‘irresistible vagueness’ of the term that causes over-generalization. To respond to this problem, it refers to Benjamin Tallis’ conceptualization and operationalization of the term and stresses the “vernacular” approach of the operationalization to account for the focus of the thesis on borderland residents (Rumford, 2012).

3.1 Earlier Studies on Political Boundaries

This section provides a chronological summary of the empirical and theoretical developments that paved the way for the emergence of border studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry to establish the ground for a descriptive account of the current state of the literature. The current problematics and discussions in contemporary research are influenced by the change in the empirical social reality as much as they are shaped by the previous research. The relationship between the two should be emphasized as the proliferation of borders in recent decades is accompanied by a heightened interest

in borders. Although this recent interest is interdisciplinary in its nature, during most of the 20th century, the study of borders was mostly limited to subdisciplines of international relations and political geography.

3.1.1 Early Studies of Borders in International Relations

Within the area of international relations, borders as a subject of inquiry did not receive sufficient attention for the most part of the 20th century. Up until the 1990s, the relevance of borders was limited to the structural characteristics of the international system. Such that, the studies regarding borders were exclusively focused on their effect on the nature of the interaction between international actors, that are, states. The main concern was whether borders, in addition to other structural factors, could act as constraints on the nature of the state-to-state interaction, i.e., the prevention of war. The studies in this period were state-centric in the sense that sub-regional units and non-state actors were not included in the analyses. This state-centric perspective was later challenged.

Lewis Richardson's leading study in quantitative international relations research provides one of the first border datasets (Richardson, 1960 as cited in Starr & Most, 1978). Harvey Starr and Benjamin Most state that until the mid-1970s, most of the studies were using these early and inadequate datasets (1978). In their study, they provide an up-to-date dataset and an encompassing categorization of state boundaries. They categorize borders into the colony and non-colony borders and include three sub-categories for each: contiguous land borders, 200-mile limit water borders, and proximity-zone borders (Starr & Most, 1978). It is noteworthy that their classification includes a group named proximity-zone borders, which register dyads that are separated only by a small piece of third-country territory or high seas and are not contiguous, to be able to account for significant boundaries that do not constitute immediate borders such as those situated on the Atlantic Ocean. Through this dataset and categorization, they study the impact of borders on the likelihood of war-making, alliance-making, and the diffusion of war (1978). In the following study, they exclusively focus on African borders to study the influence of borders on the likelihood of war-making (Starr & Most, 1983). Similarly, the impact of proximity on the level of interaction (Cobb & Elder, 1970 as cited in Starr & Most, 1978), the impact of isolation on the likelihood of violent conflict (Weede, 1970 as cited in Starr & Most, 1978), the role of the common land border for the reversal of

coalitions to enmity (Starr, 1975) and the average number of borders on the likelihood of war (Midlarsky, 1974) is researched in this period.

In addition to these leading quantitative studies, there were also pseudoscientific works regarding borders and territory and studies criticizing such works from a theoretical perspective in this period. One such controversial book is *The Territorial Imperative* by Robert Ardrey published in 1966. In his book, Ardrey observes the alleged similarities between the territorial behaviors of animals and the territorial social systems of humans. He asserts that what he calls the territorial principle includes both the security need that is met in the heartland and the need for “fun” that is met at the border. “Fun” in his lexicon refers to territorial fights that mostly end up in bloodshed. A third need that is included in the territorial principle is identity. Holloway criticizes Ardrey severely that he has written a pseudoscientific book because he reduces territoriality to some supposedly biological animal instincts. Holloway also criticizes Ardrey’s assumptions building on the criticism of Social Darwinism (Holloway, 1967). Although Ardrey’s book can be regarded as “hardly science,” it revived popular interest in anthropology and ethnography in this period.

3.1.2 *Early Studies on Borders in Political Geography*

Whereas the interest in borders within the domain of international relations was limited in this period, political geographers have been studying the borders since earlier and with a wider scope. In the political geography of the 20th century, the concept of the boundary was used as an umbrella term that includes borders and border regions. In addition, the terms boundary, border, and frontier were also used, although not in a conceptually nuanced way.

Julian Minghi states that in the first half of the century, geographers categorized borders according to their efficacy from a military perspective (Minghi, 1963). They compared “natural” frontiers such as rivers, mountain tops, and deserts with “artificial” frontiers meaning straight lines drawn on geographical coordinates (latitudes and longitudes) (Minghi, 1963). One of the arguments was that artificial borders were costly to maintain as there was no distinctive cue on the ground, and they were supposed to be demarcated somehow manually (Minghi, 1963). Whereas the initial classifications were built around a distinction between natural and artificial, this distinction started to be considered unavailing and misleading (Fall, 2010).

Similar to studies concerning borders in international relations, the impact of borders on the sustainability of peace is researched in political geography as well. Nicholas John Spykman studies the power potential of regions created by borders. He argues that the delimitation of borders should create similar levels of power potential in their respective countries so as to facilitate peace (Spykman, 1942). The established reasonings or approaches for the delimitation of borders in distinctive periods are also researched. Eric Fischer tracks the change in the main understanding or approaches for the delimitation of borders from physical features to cultural features and analyzes the factors that pave the way for stable and established borders. He argues that history plays a significant role concerning other stabilizing factors (Fischer, 1949).

Minghi is the first to categorize the studies on borders and boundaries. He develops categories according to the subject of study and does not consider methodological or conceptual differences (Minghi, 1963). The succeeding attempts to survey the literature on borders in political geography possess more sophisticated categorization schemes. Henk van Houtum discerns three approaches in European geographical studies (van Houtum, 2000). The first one is the “flow approach” which focuses on how borders act as barriers in front of economic flows (van Houtum, 2000, p. 59). This approach is developed earlier than the other two. According to this approach, Europe as a region constitutes a whole in which economic activities take place. Borders create discontinuities that hamper these economic activities and decrease the economic utility that could be obtained from the flow of goods and services (p. 60).

The second one concerns the cross-border cooperation and integration efforts within the EU. According to this approach, interregional economic activities are vital for the integration process, and border areas benefit from the increased cross-border economic activity (van Houtum, 2000, p. 63). The studies concerning this approach are devised in line with the political and normative goals of the European integration efforts. Moreover, the funding for these studies is provided mainly by European institutions (p. 63). Van Houtum states that this perspective differs from the flow approach in that “Whereas the flow approach assumes man to be a cost-minimizing agent (*Homo economicus*), the cross-border cooperation approach perceives man as using those contacts and contracts that he has already established while exploring new ones to satisfy his own needs (*Homo cont[r]actis*)” (p.64).

The third view concerns not the physical constitution of borders but their social construction from the perspective of people producing and also challenging them. This

approach conceptualizes the human as “homo socialis” (p.68). Similarly, its conception of space is “affective, cognitive, and mental” (p.69). Their primary presumption is that distance is not just a material phenomenon but is also influenced by perception. Similarly, borders are not perceived as lines on maps but as constructs that refer to differentiation and distinction (p.68). This last category has gained prominence in the following two decades, especially with the proliferation of interdisciplinary approaches to borders.

3.1.3 The Emergence of Border Studies as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study

Starting from the late 1970s, the distinction between various research domains that take borders as research subjects has blurred. Such that we witnessed the emergence of an interdisciplinary interest in border studies. Henk van Houtum indicates several institutions that played a role in the development of border studies (2000). In 1976, Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) was established to study the Mexico-United States borderlands. Its research focus widened in the following years, and it started publishing *The Journal of Borderland Studies* in 1986. Today this Journal is one of the preeminent journals in the area. Following the establishment of ABS, various other centers focused on the study of borders emerged all around the world: International Boundaries Research Unit was established in 1989, Nijmegen Centre for Border Research in 1998, and The African Borderland Research Network in 2007 (van Houtum, 2000). This increased concern can be explained by empirical changes in the same period. The borders proliferated in the post-Cold War era both in the sense of the multiplicity of forms and purposes and the emergence of new political borders where there were non-existent before. The newly emerging borders after the collapse of the Soviet Union and identity-based border disputes in the following decade provided cases enabling fruitful comparisons. The heightened discussions on borders paved the way for the emergence of border studies as an interdisciplinary field of study.

Another significant influence on the emergence of “border studies” was theoretical rather than empirical. Firstly, the theoretical trends within the wider social sciences influenced the way borders are studied. As a result, new perspectives bearing ethnographic and post-structuralist approaches started to emerge (Paasi, 2012). This indicates the increased influence of anthropological and sociological theories on geographers studying borders. Secondly, international relations, which used to be one of the main subdisciplines under which borders were studied, was criticized for its

fundamental assumptions. Especially John Agnew's criticism regarding the discipline of international relations' abstention from questioning its fundamental geographical assumptions could be understood both as a step toward the realization of borders' theoretical heftiness and the acknowledgment of border studies as a separate discipline. Instead of the conventional perspective, Agnew proposes approaching the territoriality of states and territorial states in their historical development and questioning their persistence (Agnew, 1994). It should be underlined that although Agnew perceives the territorial state as a social phenomenon that is not the final or only structure through which political relations are governed, he does not support the idea or anticipation that borders will lose their relevance in the near future as a result of increasing globalization. Instead, he argues that the territorial state structure now operates at the global level (Agnew, 1994).

These empirical changes, together with the wider changes within the social sciences, shaped the border research in such a way that whereas in the previous period, the borders were studied from specific and distinct disciplinary perspectives, from this period onwards, these distinct disciplinary perspectives started to be banded together within single articles looking at the various facades of borders. Paasi states that "the terrain of border research is now fusing, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish separate academic realms with their own objects, concepts or methods of border research" (Paasi, 2012). However, this is not to argue that today's border studies have a common border theory or acknowledged methodological approaches. On the contrary, Paasi argues that rather than aiming at fixed theories, border studies should produce theories that can be employed in various contexts that are open for development and are continuously changing (2012). The following summary of the literature in this chapter resonates with this goal and follows the main discussion themes that brought nuanced theories on the epistemology, ontology, and methodology of border studies.

3.2 *Current State of the Literature*

The emergence of border studies as an interdisciplinary brought together methodological pluralism and a multitude of theoretical perspectives. Therefore, it is hard to argue that border studies is a unified field with a clear ontological, epistemological, and methodological understanding of how to define and study borders. However, one can talk about a paradigm shift that differentiates the current approaches from the earlier

accounts mentioned above. Anton Kireev and Sergei Yachin state that arguing for the existence of a dominant paradigm does not suggest that there exists a consensus regarding the theoretical approaches within border studies (Kireev & Yachin, 2017). Their perspective is rather limited to a more abstract level in which a pattern, or consensus, regarding the ontological, and epistemological presumptions can be observed. Kireev and Yachin term the current dominant paradigm of border studies the “individual-centric paradigm” (Kireev & Yachin, 2017). Compared to the preceding dominant paradigm, namely the “nature-centric paradigm,” the current paradigm values the “ontological power” of the individual over the state. Whereas the previous paradigm is based on the principles of natural sciences in that borders are accepted as phenomena of the structural reality, shaped primarily by states and studied at the state level of analysis, the current perspective conceptualizes borders as social processes over which individuals have agency to shape (Kireev & Yachin, 2017).

In this section, the discussions that shaped the fundamental and, at times, competing and co-existing assumptions and terms of the current literature will be summarized. Firstly, the processual turn paved the way for a processual ontology of the borders, in which social phenomena are not accepted as an outcome of another one; but as an ongoing process of becoming, under the subsection “What is a Border?” In the following two subsections, the attempts to theorize the actors and site of these processes will be analyzed under the respective subsections of “Who Borders?” and “On the Where of Borders”. Both the discussions on the actors within this spatiotemporal structure through which borders are analyzed and the site in which these processes take place, generated a new terminology in which social practices of de-bordering and re-bordering are conceptualized and categorized.

3.2.1 *What is a “Border”?*

As indicated earlier, as a result of the change in the empirical reality, the definition of fundamental concepts such as “border” became available for novel inquiries (Kolossoff, 2015). Vladimir Kolossoff states that “Since the end of the Cold War era, state borders have increasingly been understood as multifaceted social institutions rather than solely as formal political markers of sovereignty” (Kolossoff, 2015, p. 29). Compared to earlier conceptualizations that frame borders as static and constant lines on the map, these new perspectives embraced the borders as constantly changing social phenomena and

questioned their ontology. This change in the very foundational premises of the literature is coined “The Processual Turn” by Chiara Brambilla and Reese Jones (Brambilla & Jones, 2020).

Brambilla and Jones stress the underlying ontological assumptions of the processual turn. This new “processual ontology,” they argue, “recognizes that reality is constantly evolving” as opposed to the earlier “realist” perspective, which “envisages ontology as being a priori to human intervention, prior to cognition and recognition suggesting that there are some dimensions of borders that pre-exist human understanding and actions” (Brambilla & Jones, 2020, p. 1). They refer to articles written in the late 1990s by prominent political geographers Anssi Paasi and David Newman to designate the beginning of this period. According to Paasi and Newman, boundaries as processes are embedded in border narratives that are linked to broader narratives of nation-states and are sustained in the form of a specific institution through social practice. They also underlie the function of boundaries in the maintenance of the distinction between “us and them” and the construction of identity (Newman & Paasi, 1998).

Another significant steppingstone of the processual turn is the changeover from the concept of the border to “bordering.” The use of “bordering” instead of borders created a nomenclature that can capture the processual characteristics of borders. The article by Henk van Houtum and Thomas Naerssen defines bordering in relation to the construction of identities and the representations of “homogeneous” communities (van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002). In reference to this multifaceted quality of borders, they use the term “(b)ordering and othering.” The letter in parenthesis refers to the ordering power of borders over the communities living encircled by them and their power to shape identities, to represent a unified identity, and to eliminate whoever is deemed as “other” within “us” (p.126). Brambilla criticizes the bordering & othering approach for its conceptualization of borders as “markers of belongings.” She, on the other hand, stresses the fact that as much as borders are markers of belonging, they are also “places of becoming” (Brambilla, 2015). Her criticism is derived from the idea that the “othering” branch of van Houtum and Naerssen’s theory is understudied in comparison to the (b)ordering and ordering axis of the theory.

3.2.2 *Who Borders?*

The question of “who borders” became relevant after the acknowledgment of borders as social processes since the actors behind the bordering practices are pertinent to the nature of these social processes. Whereas the realist accounts that were prominent during the last century recognize states and state apparatuses as the main actors who establish and sustain border lines and border regimes, the processual turn laid down the existence of a multiplicity of actors behind bordering processes. Such that the bordering practices are no longer accepted as the exclusive domain of nation-states. This realization brought together approaches that esteem bottom-up processes of bordering and unconventional bordering agents. This section concerns the significance of daily practices in sustaining borders and the role of non-state actors.

Within the discussions regarding the actors of bordering, Rumford’s contribution requires a more detailed account as his research is primarily focused on the non-traditional or bottom-up bordering agents and he provides a methodological window through which the performances of these agents could be studied. The term “borderwork” coined by Rumford is both a term that qualifies a specific set or group of bordering practices and also a theoretical lens that argues for the scientific significance of these practices (Rumford, 2008, 2013). In this sense, the term opened a path within the border studies that focuses on the “vernacularization of borders,” which will be analyzed in depth below, and created tools for research focusing on this phenomenon. Such that new conceptual extensions such as “moral borderwork” (Richter, 2021) and “humanitarian borderwork” (Pallister-Wilkins, 2017a) are generated on this basis.

The term “borderwork” stresses the daily aspects of everyday bordering undertaken by “the people”. Borderwork refers to re-bordering and de-bordering activities undertaken by recently acknowledged so-called non-traditional border workers from below as opposed to top-down bordering conducted by states. Rumford’s concept builds on the recognition of Balibar’s thesis that borders are everywhere and are experienced differently by different people (E. Balibar, 2002b, 2002a; É. Balibar, 2009). Bordering is accepted as an aspect of everyday life and workings of civil society and the people are designated responsible for bordering outcomes. In addition, the term not only includes actions that challenge the existing borders but also actions that reinforce borders or justify them. Moreover, Rumford states that “borderwork is often exclusionary and by no means always works for democratization or humanitarian ends” (Rumford, 2008). In this sense,

what combines these various sets of actions under the same umbrella is that they are primarily bottom-up initiatives.

Two points which require further examination with regard to the definition and development of the concept of borderwork. Firstly, although cross-border economic activities, such as cross-border trade or smuggling, require the existence of border as an institution, they do not necessarily re-constitute the border or re-locate it somewhere else. Rather, these activities capitalize on borders as existing structures through which economic interest is sought. Therefore, these activities cannot be considered under the category of “borderwork” (Rumford, 2013). Secondly, Rumford explicitly states that the term borderwork also includes initiatives by non-citizens (2008, p. 2). Moreover, in his later accounts, following Isin and Nielsen’s thesis that borderwork is “an act of citizenship,” he indicates the potential of borderwork for creating novel forms of political empowerment all the while including political acts of non-citizens in establishing their political self (Rumford, 2014).

Rumford’s term, borderwork, influenced the border studies in that local contexts and bottom-up processes of bordering became more salient. In his later accounts on borderwork, Rumford calls this development the “vernacularization of border research” in reference to the increased importance of local contexts with regard to borders. Vernacularization of borders, and the term borderwork as a part of it, reveals two main acknowledgments. Firstly, it indicates that state borders do not always result from a consensus among parties, nor do they need consensus to continue operating. This indicates that political conflict is an essential part of borders. Secondly, it indicates that ordinary people not only utilize borders for their own interest, as generally acknowledged, but they also shape and relocate borders for their own ends (Jones & Johnson, 2016).

Rumford’s term was later adopted in specific contexts. The term “humanitarian borderwork” coined by Polly Pallister-Wilkins directs our attention to the various forms of borderwork. She states that most of the literature focuses on borderwork undertaken by non-state actors that curb or control human mobility in relation to practices of state or supra-state level border security entities (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015, 2016, 2017b, 2017a, 2018, 2019). Her focus rather lies in the humanitarian search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. In this context, humanitarian borderwork refers to actions that aim at saving and securing lives in the face of violent border security practices (2017). Another extension of the borderwork is termed by Line Richter: moral borderwork. This term refers to “the multiple forms of moral labor that go into producing, maintaining, and

transgressing the border” (Richter, 2021, p.5). Richter researches the anti-smuggling policies in relation to the moral double-sidedness of smuggling businesses (2021).

3.2.3 On the “‘Where’ of Borders”

Brambilla argues that the bordering concept falls short of explaining the “shifting location of borders” (Brambilla, 2015, p. 19). The location here refers to any context, material and non-material, where “specific bordering processes have impacts, are represented, negotiated or displaced – but also different socio-cultural, political, economic as well as legal and historical settings” and she combines theoretical contributions on this subject under “‘where’ of borders” (Brambilla, 2015, p. 22). She builds on the discussion by Etienne Balibar on the dispersion of borders. Balibar argues that borders have moved from the edges of the nation-state to the various areas within its territory:

“The borders of new sociopolitical entities, in which an attempt is being made to preserve all the functions of the sovereignty of the state, are no longer entirely situated at the outer limit of territories; they are dispersed a little everywhere, wherever the movement of information, people, and things is happening and is controlled—for example, in cosmopolitan cities.” (E. Balibar, 2002b, p.71)

Balibar’s argument paved the way for discussions regarding the “where” of borders in which borders are understood to be dispersed throughout society. Although the saliency of alternative geographies of bordering, such as airports, security checks, and detention centers, has increased following Balibar’s thesis, this tendency did not eclipse the conventional understanding of borders as state borders and the academic interest in these spaces of territorial bordering. However, Rumford argues that the acknowledgment of the “borders are dispersed” thesis should direct researchers’ attention away from explicitly nation-state-oriented projects to a multi-perspectival approach outside of a “narrow nation-state context” (Rumford, 2012). Another significant point that has been brought up through these discussions is that the notions of interiority and exterritoriality, which are based on the principles of the territorial nation-state, are not sufficient anymore to capture the spatial richness the borders beget (É. Balibar, 2009).

Balibar’s thesis that borders are dispersed has two implications. Firstly, the argument that we can find borders understood as social practices dispersed throughout social life implies the end of the exclusive position of the nation-state as the bearer of borders as discussed above. Such that citizens also create and sustain cultural differences. In addition to the changed understanding of borders’ location in space, their relative position

regarding the public sphere has also changed in that “borders are not marginal to the constitution of a public sphere but rather are at the center” (É. Balibar, 2009, p. 2). Van Houtum directs our attention to the change of nomenclature regarding the acknowledgment of the dispersed nature of borders. Whereas the earlier realist accounts of borders used the term “boundary” to indicate territorial borders, the current concept of border is “understood as a site at and through which socio-spatial differences are communicated.” in its broadest sense (van Houtum, 2005, p.672). It should be noted that in the domain of anthropology, these two terms have the opposite use in which borders are understood in their strictest territorial meaning (van Houtum, 2005).

Secondly, it implies that state borders are de- and re-territorialized. Especially those studies with a focus on human mobility and the wider literature on migration studies were quick to accept Balibar’s thesis since it revealed how borders are not only found in the exact cartographic boundaries of nation-states but are also being enforced abroad in cooperation with neighboring states. The extraterritorialization or/and externalization of border controls are based on this theoretical premise. The concept implies that global migration management is increasingly conducted through advanced technologies and outsourced to third countries. The studies employing this concept indicate that European border management moved out of Europe to Türkiye, (Karadağ, 2019; Üstübcü, 2019) to North and West Africa (Casas-Cortes et al., 2010, 2016) However, it should be noted that a growing literature indicates how these peripheral countries and the Global South, in general, are negotiating the externalizing policies and developing “counteractive strategies” (Karadağ, 2019, 2022; Stock et al., 2019)(Karadağ, 2019, 2022; Stock et al., 2019).

Didier Bigo’s analysis of the European border regime demonstrates how supranational borders are dispersed to computers and cyberspace through databases and sophisticated surveillance technologies (Bigo, 2014). Such that, the re-territorialization of border controls involves intangible geographies as well. This proliferation of cyber-borders is termed “iBorders.” Pötzsch defines “iborder” as a “socio-technological apparatus that employs techniques of biometric and algorithmic bordering to validate, establish, and indeed produce, identities and patterns of life” (Pötzsch, 2015, p.111). In addition to its relevance for cartographic discussions, “borders” also relate to advanced computational methods of data collection, processing, and identity verification methods utilized for surveilling bodies of state governance. This situation demonstrates that not only scholarly criticism against the conventional mindset but also the conventional

mapping approaches adapt themselves to current changes in the technological and political environment. Moreover, this adaption takes place through shaping subjectivities and practices (Pötzsch & Brambilla, 2015).

Revival of Interest in the Traditional Territorial Markers of Boundaries and Borderlands

Whereas the above-mentioned arguments focus on non-traditional markers of belonging and non-cartographic forms of bordering, they do not exclude the definition of borders as a territorial construct. Moreover, the recent clashes on the European and American borderlands between migrants and law enforcement officers paved the way for a revived interest in state borders and borderland areas understood in the conventional sense, yet, with a perspective that considers the dispersed nature of borders. The 2020 Edirne Events, clashes between migrants and police on the Mexico-US border in the last few years, and the 2022 police massacre of migrants on the Morocco-Spain border are a few of the many examples of border violence experienced by migrants on a daily basis. These empirical phenomena of increasing border violence require a focus on traditional borders and this thesis responds to this need by studying a violent European border.

These events can be termed as “border spectacle” in reference to Guy Debord (Debord, 2012) since they relate to broader social and political conflicts that emerge through border incidents with high publicity that shapes public opinion. In his 2011 article, Nicholas de Genova discusses how “Border policing and immigration law enforcement produce a spectacle that enacts a scene of ‘exclusion’” shaping public opinion in a way that might normalize “citizenship inequalities as categorical differences” (de Genova, 2013, p.1) Based on his ideas, Katja Franko studies the conflict for moral authority between the NGOs and Frontex on the European borders. Whereas the above-mentioned articles by Pallister-Wilkins on humanitarian borderwork propose a “convergence of humanitarianism and policing,” her findings challenge this assumption and reveal the moral tension between two categories of border workers as demonstrated by their endeavor to sustain border spectacles in support of their moral missions on social media (Franko, 2021).

Within the context of the Edirne border, the race for moral authority is most visible between the state-level actors of the EU and Türkiye. Although they worked in cooperation since the early 2000s to develop the border infrastructure of Türkiye, in the

current situation, the border policies of these two polities conflict with each other. Moreover, the moral underpinnings of these opposing policies generate a broader discussion on the power of the EU in managing and controlling human mobility in “its neighborhood.” The article by Peter Teunissen and Penny Koutrolidou frames the European border policy as “imperialism” and discusses the instrumentalization of migrants by both sides during the 2020 Edirne Events (Teunissen & Koutrolidou, 2022). In a similar vein, Sibel Karadağ studies “how Turkey, using the notion of ‘floodgates’ as political leverage, capitalizes on migration diplomacy gaining financial benefits and political leverage” (Karadağ, 2022). I follow their thesis when analyzing the politics of morality as it occurs in the borderland area in Chapter 6.

3.3 *Borderscapes and Borderscaping*

The previous accounts highlighted the multifaceted and multi-sited characteristics of borders. The borderscaping approach provides a theoretical lens and a discussion framework that can capture these characteristics. The thesis follows the “borderscaping” approach in this thesis and frames the Edirne borderland as a “borderscape.” In order to review the literature on borderscaping, it is necessary to discuss the initial use of the term during the first decade of the 21st century in relation to antecedent terms from which the borderscaping approach is developed and highlight the richness of meaning provided by the term borderscaping and its ancestors through etymological accounts presented in the literature. This section will also analyze how the borderscaping approach responds to emphasized arguments in the literature. Lastly, it states the criticism regarding the vagueness of the borderscape notion and addresses Tallis’ operationalization of the term to respond to this criticism and to show how Tallis’ approach suits the vernacular perspective of this thesis.

Although concerning to theoretical implication several other similar terms such as “border landscape” and “borderland” were already in use, borderscaping provides a distinct approach. These antecedent accounts were developed mainly in the study area of geography. As used by precursors of border studies, such as Prescott and Rumley, and Minghi, the term border landscape referred to the production of nation-state border areas with a focus on the material constitution of these regions. Although Prescott focuses on the representations of borders as well, he prefers the term “cultural landscape” for such discussions (Prescott, 2014). Similarly, the following account by Minghi and Rumley

carries distinctions such as “urban landscape” and “natural landscape” as well. Elena Dell’Agnese provides a detailed analysis of the terms of borderland and border landscape (Dell’Agnese, 2015). She states that these earlier accounts take the notion of landscape as an area or region (Dell’Agnese & Szary, 2015) and then compared with the borderscaping approach these accounts were mostly descriptive (Dell’Agnese, 2015).

With regard to the development of the term itself, one of the first uses of the term dates back to the first decade of the 21st century. Whereas Harbers (2003) and Dollf Bonekamper and Marieke Kuipers (2004) use the term to refer to the physical landscape around political boundaries, Anke Strüver’s account (2005) examines the representations of borders (as cited in Dell’Agnese, 2015; Dell’Agnese & Szary, 2015). Another significant source of the term is Appadurai’s metaphor of “scapes” to categorize the social structures of the post-modern world (Appadurai, 1996 as cited in Dell’Agnese, 2015). It should be noted that borderscape is not among the five scapes defined by Appadurai which are ethnoscapescapes, technoscapescapes, ideoscapescapes, financescapescapes, and mediascapescapes. However, his influence on the development of the term is significant. In a later use of the term, Perera focuses on the Pacific context in which Australia’s migration policy or the Pacific Solution as known by the public is creating zones of inclusion and exclusion (Perera, 2007). Analyzing the acts of de-territorialization of various Australian islands by the government and pushbacks committed in the open sea, she highlights how the construction of various zones of inclusion and exclusion is threatening the lives of the migrants and at the same time intruding on their right to movement. In her analysis, she conceptualizes the various border zones in the Pacific as borderscapes. She states that “Cutting across the conventional classifications into separate “domestic” and “foreign” policy concerns, the notion of a borderscape allows for differentiated understandings of space, territoriality, sovereignty, and identity across this zone” (p.224). It should be highlighted that her conceptualization demonstrates a break from the conventional domestic and foreign dichotomy in which borders are seen as mere lines of dysconnectivity or difference. In line with that, Rajaram and Grundy-Warr argue in the introduction section of the book, that instrumentalization of the border to create a domestic space in which the state is the sole sovereign and space of exclusion, “clears territorial space of dissension and difference” at the same time asserting a territorial conception of justice. They also stress the incomplete and in flux nature of borderscapes. This stress relates to the idea that borders are not solely under the power of states but are also continuously shaped and represented by the people.

The etymological origin of the term is also frequently included in discussions on borderscaping. Van Houtum and Spierings state that the term landscape comes from the Dutch words *land* and *scheppen* (to create) (van Houtum & Spierings, 2012). Considering that landscaping has a long history in the Netherlands it is not a coincidence that the word “*landschap*” is first used within this context. Brambilla states that the word landscape refers both to the shaping of land and the representation of landscape in painting and other cultural areas. By bridging these two compatible meanings, borderscaping creates a richness of meaning and a theoretical stance through which borders are analyzed (Brambilla, 2015). Brambilla argues that the etymological origins and the double meaning of the term support Rajaram and Grundy-Warr’s perspective that borders are always and continuously “becoming” such that they are not only “markers of belonging” but also “places of becoming” in reference to Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the term “becoming” (2015).

Another contribution to the development of the term itself was the addition of the “-ing” suffix by Alice Buoli in her dissertation focusing on the Morocco-Spain border. In her research, Buoli uses the term “borderscaping” to refer to the methodological aspect of the term and states that borderscape does not only define and connote spatiotemporal phenomena but also provides an approach to study and shape that phenomenon (Buoli, 2015). In her operationalization of the term, she pursues “borderlands architecture” (van Houtum & Eker, 2016) However, it should be emphasized that she develops the notion of borderscaping as a design method that takes the social reality into the examination as well, rather than a research method to study the social phenomenon.

3.3.1 *Borderscaping in Response to Main Issues in Border Studies*

The borderscaping approach can be considered successful in responding to main issues of the literature and its success justifies its application within the scope of this thesis. Firstly, the idea of the territorial trap as coined by Agnew refers to the geographical assumption that state sovereignty is strictly defined in territorial terms and the state-society relations are founded upon a distinction between an “inside” where state sovereignty sustains the order and an “outside” in which chaos exists (1994). However, Agnew indicates the insufficiency of such a dichotomy. Although perspectives that conceptualize borders as regions constitute a criticism of such dichotomy by underlining that borders are more than mere lines that define these inside and outside areas, they

nevertheless continue to represent borders as static spaces predefined by state sovereignty. On the other hand, the borderscapes approach proposes a second competing meaning of borders as sites of bottom-up struggles in which the people also have a political agency.

Rescuing the border states from the territorialist trap can be considered a first step in studying the counter-hegemonic nature of borders. The second step considers the development of a framework that can account for the counter-hegemonic narratives that take shape in or at the borders. In her study of the LampedusaIn Festival in the Italian/Tunisian borderscape, Brambilla draws our attention to the ways in which borders are shaped by non-state actors and the way these agencies are shaped in opposition to hegemonic regimes of modern state structures (Brambilla, 2016). Brambilla argues that migrants shape their identity and claim their agency through performative means in the southern borderscape of Europe.

Thirdly, the diffused, differentiated and dispersed nature of borders is indicated in the literature (Balibar, 2002). According to this perspective, borders are not only found at the edges of state territory but everywhere in which identity construction is achieved through exclusion and creating spaces of homogenous inclusivity and security. The (b)ordering and othering approach proposed by Van Houtum and Naerssen conceptualizes borders as processes. This perspective helps analyze borders as 'paradoxical structures' that can capture not only traditional borders that are found at the edges of states but also borderings inherent in the workings of society (Brambilla 2015, p. 24). Yet, the b/ordering and othering approach falls short of explaining "the productive nature of power as well as the rich fabric of resistances and moments of subjectivation that crisscross the very working of those regimes at the level of everyday life" (Casas-Cortes et al., 2016, p. 592). Brambilla argues that the borderscape lens complements the b/ordering and othering approach by proposing a multi-sited approach that "challenges the 'linearity' of stable, unchanging, definite borders while acknowledging borders' conflicting multiplicity, which composes borderscapes as shifting fields of claims, counter-claims and negotiations among various actors and historically contingent interests and processes" (Brambilla, 2020, p.4).

Fourthly, the lack of epistemological, ontological, and methodological discussions within the border studies is indicated (Parker & Vaughan-Williams, 2009). Brambilla offers a discussion on borderscapes through these three axes of methodology, epistemology and ontology of borders. The need for such discussion is caused by the need

to free border studies from the trap of methodological nationalism (Brambilla, 2015). Brambilla's contribution is a significant one as it responds to the problemata explained above about the processual ontology of borders and the epistemological territorialist trap. Concerning the methodology, borrowing from Jeremy W. Crampton, she suggests a performative, participatory, and political approach. The performative approach responds to the need to account for the role of representations and performative actions in shaping the borders. This approach is in line with Anke Strüver's study of the Dutch-German borderscape through its representations in people's minds. The participatory approach responds to the need to study emergent subjectivities of our era. Rather than taking a hegemonic view of these subjectivities, she proposes researching "with" the actors that shape the borders to have a better grasp of the everyday reality at the border. Considering that these emergent subjectivities are in "becoming" through political contestation and participation, such an approach would be beneficial in empowering counter-hegemonic agencies and actors.

3.3.2 *Criticism*

Although the etymological origins of the term and the earlier uses provide us with a degree of definition of the term, the recent application of the term is far from having a particular and common meaning. In other words, these various aspects and axis through which borderscapes come to be understood also render it "too open" for interpretation (Krichker, 2021; van Houtum, 2021). Such that there exists a vagueness of definitions and a multitude of different definitions and operationalizations. Dell'Agnese and Amit Szary detect three different definitions (2015). In the following study, Dina Krichker identifies six different operationalizations of the term (2021). The more striking thing is that these operationalizations vary from artistic bordering to externalization of borders which can be accepted as proof of the vagueness of the term (Krichker, 2021). Krichker terms this as the "irresistible vagueness" of the term borderscape. Although she identifies the lack of communication among these studies as a reason for the vagueness of the term, she also states that in order for border studies to respond to the fast and considerable changes in everyday reality and the socio-political world such a multitude of meanings is needed. Yet, it also hampers the conceptual development of the term (Krichker, 2021). This thesis employs Benjamin Tallis' operationalization of the term to respond to this criticism.

Tallis' operationalization of borderscapes intends "to make sense of the diverse elements of the migration crisis and to politically interpret them with regard to their effects on identities and orders" (Tallis, 2021). For a structured understanding of borders, it suggests an analytical and representative framework comprised of "related arrays of features, discourses, and practices" and a complimenting interpretative framework to produce pragmatically relevant knowledge on "matters of concern" (Bueger & Mireanu, 2014 as quoted in Tallis, 2014, p.71). Borderscapes as related arrays enable a structured comparison among cases and deliver a focus on particular practices and discourses without losing "sight of the bigger picture" (Tallis, 2021, p. 471). Tallis' approach to social science involves a "critical pragmatism" which requires "to distinguish and contextualize" borders to produce useful knowledge responding to the migration crisis (Tallis, 2014). The interpretative framework serves this end and situates borders at the intersection of "(in)security and (im)mobility" (Tallis, 2021). The interpretative aspect of the framework also necessitates the self-reflective approach on the researcher's part to realize biases that might cloud the inferences. This last requirement is addressed in the methodology chapter.

3.3.3 *Borderscape as an Analytical Framework*

Tallis defines borderscape as "related arrays of features, discourses, and practices" (Tallis, 2021). Such categories are widely employed in border studies and ethnographic studies as well. However, he does not follow an established theory to construct this framework but instead takes a systemic/pragmatic approach. He states that:

"In order to make the borderscape fit for (my) purpose, I did, however, need to include materialities as well as discourses and practices. To do so, I took inspiration from the anthropologist Tim Ingold's (1993) conceptualization of landscape as being comprised of an "array of related features" and an "array of related activities." From there, it was not difficult to make the imaginative leap to a borderscape (a subset of landscape) constituted by border(ing) features (encompassing the spatial-material-architectural aspects of CBS) and border activities, which could be productively re-imagined as border(ing) practices—thus bringing in the 'practice turn' in CSS/IPS (Balzacq et al., 2010; Bueger and Gadinger 2015). Ingold neglects discourses, but other anthropologists (e.g., Bender 2002) show (implicitly) how these could (and should) be integrated" (Tallis, 2021, p. 415).

Although Tallis briefly indicates the theoretical basis of the framework, he does not comment on how these arrays relate to each other theoretically in detail. Moreover, considering that his source of inspiration resides in another discipline, he does not provide a discussion on how landscape theory fits into the border studies discipline. The use of

indefinite words such as "inspiration" or "imaginative leap" demonstrates this problem. Considering that the borderscape notion is understood as a specific landscape and landscape theory is utilized as a beneficial source for border literature, I do not consider it without a basis. Nevertheless, it lacks a nuanced and developed theory. Instead, he focuses on constructing a contextualized and distinguished borderscape framework and articulates relevant theoretical arguments within that framework. I argue that articulation of these relevant theoretical considerations countervails the disadvantages of lacking a clearly defined theoretical basis.

Fortunately, the conceptualization of each group of related arrays is more nuanced and viable. The border(ing) features are defined from a "material-semiotic" approach and involve "particular site(s), form(s) and function(s) (intended or unintended)," which can be found "wherever bordering functions take place with sufficient 'border-ness' to make bordering places, whether fleeting or longer-lasting (Green, 2018)." (Tallis, 2021, p.415). To explain the primary considerations of this category, he states that "Each feature can be labeled with a conceptual metaphor that conveys its particularity 'beyond the line' (the traditional, misleading border imaginary) and also allows consideration of how 'affective materialities' impact the ways in which borders are 'believed' as well as 'made' (Navaro-Yashin, 2012)." (Tallis, 2021, p.415).

The border(ing) discourses are defined as "the narratives, ideas or 'imaginaries ready for use' (Bürkner, 2017) that underpin, legitimate, express or emerge through related policies, practices and features" (Tallis, 2021, p.416). The relationship between bordering discourses and other arrays is twofold: it both represents the substantive fractures of the border regime and also reproduces them. To further explain this category he briefly analyzes the bordering discourses of the Schengen zone and demonstrates the discursive border(ing)s.

The last category, border(ing) practices, is defined as "the tasks of bordering, but also the logics they arise from and give rise to, the repeated activities and 'ways of doing' of (professional or non-professional) actors involved in bordering" (Tallis, 2021, p.418). He constructs this theory influenced by the "practice turn" in IR. Such a turn is more apparent in border studies. Adding -ing to "border" and the following discussions demonstrate the practice turn in border studies.

3.3.4 *Borderscape as an Interpretative Framework*

The interpretative framework distinguishes and contextualizes borderscape at the intersections of (im)mobility and (in)security. As the framework builds on the disciplinary considerations of mobility studies and security studies, it approaches borderscapes from an IR perspective and regards the role of power as central to the study of borderscapes. Although this limitation benefits research on "borderings that occur beyond state frontiers," mobility and security intersections are most apparent at state frontiers (Tallis, 2021, p.419). This framework also acts as a profitable criterion when evaluating empirical findings.

Tallis also indicates the need to contextualize borderscapes in reference to political considerations. To do so, he builds on the "Identities-borders-orders" approach and amends the framework to include borderscapes in place of borders. His revised approach, "identities, borderscapes, orders," relates to both the geopolitical level by considering the "orders" and also the individual level by focusing on how identities are shaped, performed, and negotiated through a Foucauldian understanding of "power." It should also be noted that he puts "governance" as the counterpart of orders to stress the mechanisms through which individuals and communities influence and counter orders. The focus of the thesis lies on the borderland residents. Therefore, Tallis' coupling of order with governance is relevant to the goals of the thesis as it enables us to frame local's daily practices as bordering practices which at times overlap with state bordering. Moreover, in line with the arguments by Brambilla, I focused on the performative, participatory, and political aspects of the border and conducted the research in line with these principles. This small shift of focus enabled me to engage with the everyday practices and discourses in the borderland without losing connection with the international developments shaping the everyday in the borderland.

Chapter 4:

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This descriptive and exploratory study aims at providing a grounded and subjective analysis and interpretation of the case. Therefore, it researches descriptive questions of how Turkish borderland residents perceive the European and Turkish border regimes and what roles their daily practices and discourses play in the sustenance, change, and reform of these regimes. Moreover, it aims to situate these perspectives and practices within the context of acute political problems in the region caused by the current border regime. In this section, I will introduce the research design of this study and address some methodological issues. Firstly, I will outline the research design. Then, I will clarify the data collection mechanism and explain the conceptualization and operationalization of “borderscape” framework followed in the analysis of the findings. I will also provide a critique of the research design by indicating some of its shortcomings and discuss the issue of objectivity in qualitative research and the researcher’s positionality. Finally, I will present an introspective reflection essay to situate my perspective as a researcher and narrate how engaging with my prejudices contributed to the quality of this study.

4.1 Research Design

This descriptive case study of the Greece-Türkiye borderscape follows an interpretivist approach and a qualitative methodology in that the underlying beliefs, prejudices, and the dissertator’s background influences the observation and interpretation of findings uniquely. Although such a study might fail to provide replicable results, comparisons with similar studies would illuminate new aspects of borders and the researcher’s positionality, furthering our knowledge. Therefore, the primary concern of this study is to explore through inductive inference. In their article discussing the quality criteria of inductive research, Kevin Corley, Pratima (Tima) Bansal, and Haitao Yu argue that the premise of inductive research is to offer “new ways of seeing”(Corley, Bansal & Haitao, 2021). In a study that builds on their argument the authors state:

“Ultimately, inductive researchers must capture the reviewers’ and editors’ imagination by conveying the importance of the questions being answered, the thickness of the data, rich descriptions, and the quality of the writing. These are the merits that are unique to inductive research and must be embraced and valued” (Corley, Bansal & Haitao, 2021, p. 162).

In line with their perspective, this study gives weight to offering new ways of looking at this border region, the identities of locals, and their daily practices. The research design ultimately responds to this goal by further interrogating the researcher's role and perspective in addition to the perspectives and daily practices of locals. These two parallel processes, the retrospective and the ethnographic processes of inquiry, interact with each other in every step to increase the accountability of the research (Figure 4.1). After data collection, these parallel lines converge, and the data is treated with the interrogated perspective to achieve a subjective but theoretically and empirically grounded interpretation of the case.

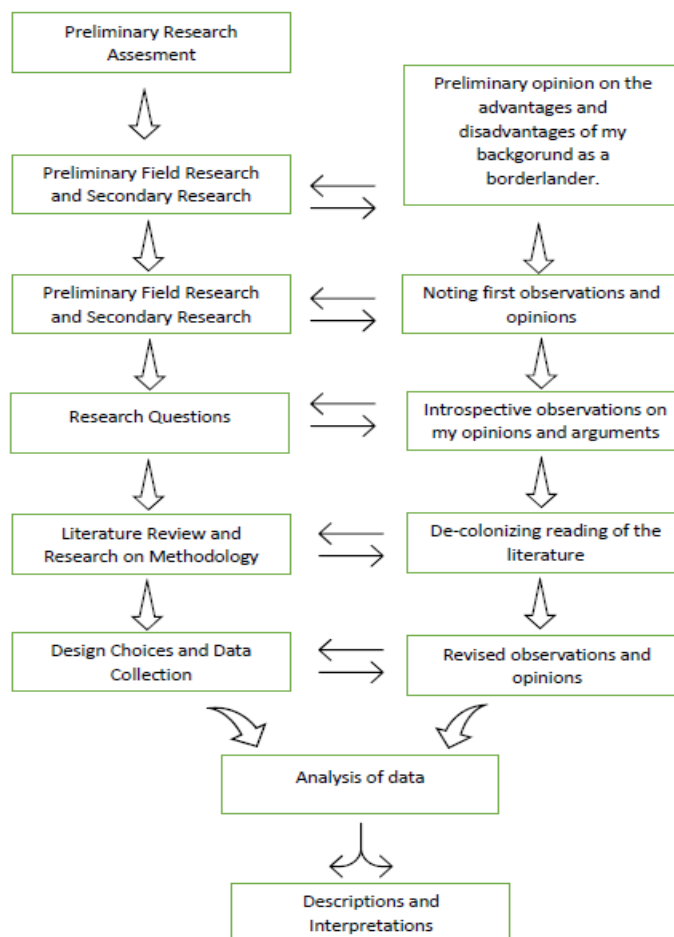


Figure 4.1 Overall Research Design Diagram

4.1.1 *The Research Area and Subjects*

The research area is defined as the settlements situated at or in direct contact with the dead zone. The dead zone is constituted of the area within the range of 100-400 meters from the borderline as defined by the Military Prohibited Zones and Security Zones Regulation. The area is mostly composed of agricultural fields. Some of the settlements are also situated in this area, at times intercepting the patrolling roads on the levees. The other settlements are separated from the dead zone by farm fields. Nevertheless, the daily labor required settlers to visit this area frequently.

I determined three settlements with differing population sizes and degrees of urbanization. To provide anonymity for the respondents, I will not include this information. I also visited almost all border settlements and conversed with their residents. Entry into settlements situated in the second-degree military zone is permitted in case the non-resident is at least a third-degree relative of a resident. Therefore, I sought a military officer's permit when visiting such areas and did not trespass into the first-degree military zone.

The most pressing characteristic of the border region and Edirne region, in general, is the high percentage of people with a migration history in their families. A considerable part of immigration to the area during the 20th century was from the Balkans. Yet, there are also Kurdish communities displaced by the Ottoman and Turkish authorities from the Eastern region. Currently, the area is receiving migration from Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Russia. The main industry in the small border settlements is agriculture and the processing of agricultural products. Rice farming, fishing and frog hunting are done extensively. A considerable part of the population is employed in these industries. There are also civil servants working in the state institutions, such as schools and community clinics. Smuggling is an informal and/or illegal industry as well.

4.1.2 *Data Collection*

The use of ethnographic methods in international relations with instrumental goals is criticized in the literature. Wanda Vradi states that ethnographic methods are often reduced to instrumental tools as a result of "a delay in cross-disciplinary reading practices," and therefore, ethnographic methods should be first and foremost directed to international relations as a discipline rather than a mere research tool (Vradi, 2008, p.280). In his response to Vradi, Jason P. Rancatore agrees with Vradi but argues that

such an endeavour does not render multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches redundant and advocates for a more optimistic interpretation of the state of current multi- and inter-disciplinary research (Rancatore, 2010). He states that “the inherent ethical dilemmas that confront the researcher using ethnographic methods are themselves potentially useful findings.” (p. 67) It can be argued that border studies respond to criticism raised by Vraști, all the while carrying the optimism of Rancatore as it critically engages with itself as a discipline and with its research subject, borders. The discussion regarding the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of border studies has an extensive place in the literature. Therefore, in line with this trend and Rancatore’s arguments, I benefited from the use of ethnographic methods to discuss my methodology as well as to collect data from the research area.

To collect data from the region, I conducted a two-year-long multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork during which I visited the region almost every month and tried to conduct my interviews on several visits. I approached correspondents through my acquaintances and followed snowball sampling and drop-in visits to coffee houses, where I contacted the correspondents without previous acquaintances. I overtly specified my goals for being there and sought their consent before the interviews. During the short trips, I followed a passive stance and posed the interview questions as neutrally as possible. Nevertheless, when I witnessed daily discussions they had with each other, I interrupted to interrogate a specific event or perspective. The interview duration varied between 10 minutes to 1 hour, most of them usually taking 30 minutes.

The interviews were conducted primarily in public settings such as coffee houses, public schools, and streets. However, the front yards of the houses act as semi-open settings that neighbors can easily access without permission. I usually conducted interviews with women in such semi-open settings, mainly in the company of their neighbors. It was not rare that a neighbor dropped in in the middle of an interview for chit-chat, sharing information, or requesting help or tools for an errand. In some cases, they suddenly left when they lost interest or were on a tight schedule. In one of the settlements, all the interviews with male correspondents were conducted in the local public school. As a result of the Covid-19 restrictions, the public school building acted as an alternative gathering place to coffee houses. As a result, there was a fluid change in the room, and as the members left or entered, the discourse changed. This indicates that there was high consensus regarding the contemporary and political problems such that disputing ideas regarding their solutions could be voiced. Moreover, the use of

reconciliatory language catered for a healthy discussion. Another “brake” that prevented quarrels and made it possible for correspondents to raise their concerns was the close and tight social relations among them. Such that they preferred addressing each other with words indicating their affinity, for instance “dayının, yeğenim, kadam, kardeşim, enişte, yenge, aba, abla, halanın...” Some of these words are also employed when addressing distant relatives and acquaintances, indicating that they are in close contact during public events and daily life. In the other two locations, I had the chance to conduct private interviews. For instance, the meetings with correspondents who used to involve in smuggling mainly occurred in either houses or farm buildings in the fields. This way, I could test the influence of the setting. My observations indicate that the existence of acquaintances did not have a significant influence.

The open-ended questions started with a question to test their daily interaction with the border (Appendix A). Firstly, I asked correspondents to indicate in which direction or where the border is situated. This question also illustrated how they perceived the border. The results indicate that the linear understanding of borders is not frequently mentioned. Rather, particular landscape elements such as the river or the levees were indicated to refer to the border. These landscape elements are employed for the study of bordering features. Then, the questions follow to interrogate their perspectives and relations with other border(ing) actors: migrants, Greek and European border patrols, European security institutions, Turkish border patrols and special police forces, Greek tourists, and Greek citizens residing on the other side of the border. Although this study privileges a vernacular perspective, the vernacular stress in border studies does not evade the linkages between the state’s domain and that of non-state actors. Therefore, I also researched the state-level developments and bilateral policies and collected information on locals’ perspectives regarding these developments to situate locals’ perspectives within the macro-level international politics.

4.1.3 Analysis of Findings

The most struggling part of the research was finding a clearly defined and, most importantly, easily conveyable framework for the analysis and interpretation of the findings. Border studies literature argues for a polysemic understanding of borders and intensely interrogates its theoretical presumptions. As a result, the existing frameworks and notions carry heavy theoretical baggage, and the research employing such terms

becomes hard to replicate due to the polysemic understanding of terms and concepts. Nevertheless, such an approach contributes to the development of the literature by providing a nuanced understanding and by responding to the multidisciplinary priorities of border studies. I tried to respond to problems of polysemy and follow a structured approach by reading the literature comparatively and by identifying how researchers respond to each and how their arguments build on each other. In the end, I preferred to follow Benjamin Tallis' borderscape notion. Tallis' framework involves an analytical and an interpretative dimension. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 present how I applied the analytical framework as a basis to identify bordering practices, discourses, and features and how I situated the interpretative framework on top of this basis to contextualize and distinguish the Greece-Türkiye land border from the perspective of locals.

The primary ethnographic data was very "loud" as a result of the intersectionality of the research subject and the multitude of levels of analysis. So, in the first stage, I identified the main bordering practices, discourses, and features and grouped them under thematic categories that constitute an array. For instance, the theme of border surveillance relates both to surveillance practices, undertaken by both the state and locals, and also to particular bordering features such as watchtowers and informal communication networks. Then, I tried to situate how these arrays relate to (im)mobility and (in)security as experienced by the locals. Following the previous example, I tried to understand how surveillance influences mobility patterns in the area or how categorical insecurities shape the discourses on surveillance. I could identify a set of causal relations by anchoring my perspective to that of locals and interpreting the analysis findings. Although the causal relations are subjective in their nature, their relevance to issues of concern was cross-checked with analysis of secondary sources, such as newspaper articles and reports.

4.1.4 *Level of Analysis*

The level of analysis can be regarded as the everyday level. However, the everyday level should not be confused with the local level as the research objectives concern multi-scalar issues. Such multi-scalar processes are hard to categorize. For instance, locals live in the middle of an international crisis, yet their everyday experience at their settlement shapes the discourse they follow regarding the crisis. Therefore, this study follows the borderscapes approach, which provides a spatiotemporal framework through which these multi-scalar processes can be evaluated. It differs from the cartographic approaches

that use international or national levels of analysis. Rather, it looks at the individual level and contextualizes the findings at the geopolitical level.

4.2 *Shortcomings and Limitations of the Research Design*

In this section, the limitations and shortcomings of the applied framework and the representatives and "objectivity" of the research will be discussed. Firstly, I will comment on the shortcomings of the operationalization of the borderscapes notion. Secondly, the research area and the demography of the region will be briefly described, and information regarding the sample size will be provided to give a transparent assessment of the representativeness of the research. Then, the positionality of the researcher and its implications will be evaluated. There is a reflection part at the end of this section. It aims to provide a space for auto-ethnographic evaluation of the researcher's background and prejudices.

4.2.1 *Shortcomings of the Operational Framework*

Tallis' framework focuses on the analysis and interpretation of empirical findings. Therefore, it is in line with the goals of this study. However, its theoretical basis can be considered "eclectic." Although the theoretical basis of each category of related arrays is well defined, it does not clearly state on what theoretical grounds he added these categories together under the borderscape notion. In other words, he does not define the relationship between these categories or their relationship to the broader concept of border or borderscape. This weakness is demonstrated when he indicates that he "takes inspiration" from landscape theory or "make[s] the imaginative leap" from one idea to another.

Considering that his main goal is to operationalize the concept to achieve a framework for analysis and interpretation, he prioritizes the operability of the framework. Moreover, his framework involves various approaches, nuances, and modes of research which are complicated and often unnecessary to describe in a detailed fashion. Therefore, I find his choice and intervention on concepts and my preference to employ his framework plausible and practical. Moreover, I included a broad and detailed literature review of the theoretical discussions to compensate for this weaknesses and tried to employ Tallis' framework informed by those theoretical discussions.

4.2.2 *Sampling and Representativeness*

The study at hand does not represent the whole border region. Even though border settlement is specifically defined as settlements directly bordering the border, there are various ethnic groups, most of them being mixed. These groups have various religious and political affiliations. I expect the Kurdish settlements at the border to be divergent cases as their migration history involves forced internal displacement, and therefore a different relationship with the state can be expected. The exclusion of Kurdish communities is an important limitation of this study and studying them would be promising in terms of finding out the influence of the relationship with central governments and states, migration histories, and ethnicity on bordering discourses and practices. Similarly, the Roma identity was not a prominent aspect of the interviews. Roma communities are living in the border region concentrated in at least 7 neighborhoods and one of which is included as a research settlement. However, the socio-economic issues in this settlement were more pronounced and I could not go further to interrogate whether they frame their Roma identity as a determining factor in their relationship to the border without exceeding the limits determined by the respondents. Moreover, working with a disadvantaged community experiencing social exclusion requires specialized knowledge and the daily experiences of Roma communities in Edirne are very diverse with some communities attaining education services and government jobs whereas some facing ethnic discrimination from their proximate neighbors. So, I cannot discern what percentage of the respondents were Roma and could not delve into social bordering practices and discourses that sustain an understanding of us versus them within the Turkish borderland. I tried to focus on the political border(ing)s that are in direct relationship to this international border. Yet, the absence of ethnic data and research on their relevance to the state bordering decreases the representativeness of the research with regards to the

To generate my sample, I used snowballing method. I interviewed 20 people in each of the three settlements. Most of the respondents are farmers. I also included fishermen, frog hunters, and people involved in smuggling in the past into my samples. 37 of the respondents were male, and 23 of them were female. As a result of the pandemic, I could not conduct the interviews in public spaces which men mostly inhabit. I could conduct interviews with female respondents mostly during summer, when I could make house visits, mostly in their gardens. Only 5 of the respondents are below 30. Twenty-two of

them are between 30 and 50, and the rest is above 50. As a result of the increased migration to urban and industrial centers in Edirne, Çorlu, and Istanbul, the rural demography is ageing. My sampling represents these demographic characteristics. As a result of my engagement in daily conversations, I had the chance to control whether my interviews were saturated. I can argue that my interview subjects strongly represent their settlements. The region-wide representation is lesser due to the reasons explained in the previous paragraph.

Another shortcoming of the sampling is that it only involves people who currently reside in the borderland and those people who have migrated elsewhere are not included. Yet, this does not constitute a limitation as the goal of this thesis is to account for the perspectives and practices of current borderland residents.

4.3 *The problem of Objectivity and Positionality of the Researcher.*

I am aware of the fact that conducting an ethnographic study in my own community, which focuses on their perspective of "other," has the danger of providing a biased interpretation of the findings. Therefore, I attempted to engage with the issue of "prejudice" and its impact on qualitative research. Rather than following a Cartesian understanding of prejudice which assumes that there is an empirical reality independent of the observer's prejudices and that the observer should attain an objective point of view, I followed Kakali Bhattacharya and Jeong-Hee Kim's discussion on Gadamer's perspective on prejudice. They argue that:

"Hence, the Cartesian notion of prejudice, in the hands of those who enact dominant, colonizing discourses, becomes a means of silencing scholars who work from the margins and who are thereby immersed as insiders within their cultural spaces" (Bhattacharya & Jeong-Hee, 2020, p.1175).

They refer to such colonizing processes through which scholars who work from the margins as "academic gatekeeping" and provides an alternative definition of rigour in research to challenge gatekeepers. To do so, they fuse the de-colonial perspective with Gadamer's inquiry on prejudice. They use the analogy of a nomadic traveller used by Gloria Anzaldúa to describe how prejudice interacts with our understanding in liminal spaces where the researcher questions and negotiates her own conflicts and loyalties. Therefore, rather than positioning prejudice as a phenomenon to stand clear, they define it "as an invitation to engage in deep, critical, introspective inquiry" (Bhattacharya and Jeong-Hee, 2020, p.1177) In line with this perspective, I included an introspective reflection path parallel to the ethnographic research path explained above. In this regard,

I tried to engage with my prejudices and understand how they shape my study and what their sources are. The reflection part below indicates my concluding comments on this process and explains how it benefited the research. Before getting to that, I will comment on the insider-outsider dichotomy in ethnographic studies and introduce "researchers facing borders" as a nuanced category of researcher positionality.

Both researchers and research subjects in social sciences have various degrees of freedom of mobility. In this study, these degrees considerably overlap as my mobility is limited as a result of political, economic, and administrative borders similar to the majority of Turkish locals living in the area. Rather than superficially defining my position as an insider or outsider to the community, I propose to define my "insiderness/outsiderness" in relation to this common experience of limited mobility. This perspective assumes a multi-positional approach as my position as an insider or outsider to the borderland community is redefined in every interview question topic. I denominate this shared experience as "facing borders." I also argue that including a discussion regarding my experience promises a new research horizon on the experiences and alternative methodologies of "researchers facing borders."

4.3.1 Introspective Reflection

First and foremost, the main reason why this study is not a comparative one involving Greek citizens is that I do not have a preferred passport in the eyes of the Greek and European authorities. The second reason is that I am coming from an economically disadvantaged background, and I do not have the privileges that would enable me to cross the border. In addition to these political and economic barriers, I also face bureaucratic barriers as the acquisition of the Schengen visa is becoming harder for Turkish citizens through bureaucratic ways. It should also be noted that as a result of my economic status, I had to work in part-time and precarious jobs which decreased the time I could allocate to applications for funding possibilities. Considering that a majority of the literature on borderscapes is done by researchers with higher mobility, I had to revisit the literature to find a suitable framework that would enable me to conduct non-cross-border research. There was great stress on discovering the politics of hope and providing theoretical definitions that challenge the territorial understanding of borders. However, I realized that the methodological discussions fall short of providing suitable methods for researchers with limited mobility. I frequently thought that it must be easy not to frame the situation

as one involving an “us vs them” dichotomy when one is not bound by the borders that give way to such dichotomy. Yet, the more I researched the more I became aware of the covert nationalism that surrounds even the most fundamental moral arguments and premises. Moreover, I also realized the political implications of making social science research. Focusing on specific aspects of specific phenomena was inherently a political choice and such choices were not indicated in most of the articles. Reaching the limits of objectivity was a transformative experience. This disillusionment constituted the foundations of this thesis and I tried to engage with these issues as much as I could.

I consider the fact that I could not conduct a cross-border study as a considerable finding in itself that tells “something” about this peculiar border. Luckily, I engaged in parallel studies which brought me in contact with other people who are interested in this particular border. My visits to the border with my beloved friend Ceminay Kara, when we were conducting our art research on the Evros River, with Bastien Deschamps, who at the time was continuing his photography project on river borders and with artist and researcher Susan Page on her preliminary field research created the perfect grounds for political and theoretical discussions where I could discover how my identity shaped my perspective. These discussions were highly beneficial in terms of examining my premises and revealing my implicit political biases. Witnessing the “games of morality” between the “Democratic” Europe and the “hospitable” Türkiye on a daily basis made it harder for me to keep a critical distance. I felt like an actor in that game. These discussions were significant as they forced me to leave such assumed responsibilities. Yet, I still consider my position as a person facing the border as a decisive characteristic of my identity. Although I am more of a white, educated, mannered “cherry” waiting to be “picked” by the European immigration authorities, aspiring to continue my studies in Europe and the locals do not usually want to cross the border per se, facing the borders give a particular perception and understanding of the social and the political barriers. This common understanding that enables one to change position, jump scales and detach from existing political axioms is an important aspect of this thesis.

Chapter 5:

**PATTERNS OF MOBILITY ON THE CROSSROADS OF
OPPORTUNITIES AND INSECURITIES**

This chapter concerns the influence of mobility patterns at the border on the daily lives of locals. To provide a structured account of the mobility patterns at the border, I will use the simplified diagram below. The military prohibited zone or the dead zone, adjacent to the “border line” has become a more surveilled and controlled area in the last 20 years. Access to this area is highly vital for migrants. Locals benefit from migrants’ bi-directional mobility involving border crossings and pushbacks by utilizing their privilege of mobility in the borderland to provide guidance and transportation services to migrants. However, this modest economic benefit comes with disadvantages as the migrants’ mobility entails a unique form of ownership regime coupled with a feeling of insecurity for locals. The analysis also indicates that the 2020 Edirne Events constitute a turning point for everyday life in the borderland as it paved the way for a border regime encouraging irregular crossings. The increased mobility produced new forms of co-ownership in the borderland and increased the number of people involved in the smuggling industry.

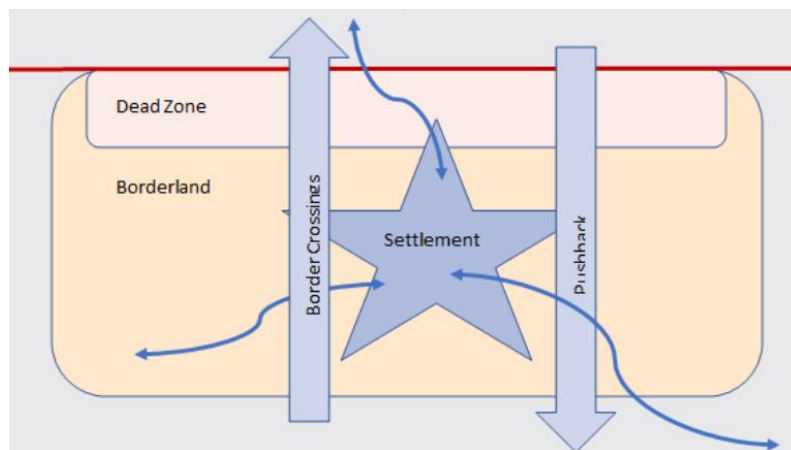


Figure 5.1: Diagram showing the main mobility patterns at the border.

5.1 *The Dead Zone and the Mobility Privileges of locals*

The settlements in the border area are surrounded by fertile agricultural fields reclaimed from the once-existing swamps and wetlands by the Evros River. Thanks to the flat and marshy valley, paddy field farming is highly profitable in the area. Although agriculture is practised in a highly mechanized manner, rice agriculture requires close observation and frequent intervention to regulate the levels of water in the paddy fields. Therefore, the majority of farmers commute to the fields almost every day during warm months from early April to late November. In the parts closer to the Edirne city center vegetable farming is more common. The close distance to the markets in Edirne and comparatively smaller plots of land render vegetable farming a better alternative in these parts. Both rice and vegetable farming require farmers to visit or work not only during the day but also at night. Once the farmers start flooding the paddy fields, they must keep an eye on the field during the process, which may continue until late in the morning. Similarly, vegetable farmers frequently start harvesting before dawn to be able to sell their produce in the market early in the morning. These practices render the valley a vivid place scattered with roaming people day and night. Although locals are comparatively privileged regarding mobility, they cannot roam the valley as they wish because of the institutional and infrastructural factors influencing their mobility.

The borderland area can be divided into three areas with distinct qualities concerning mobility regimes in the area. These are the settlement areas, the agricultural fields, and the military areas composed of the dead zone and military posts. The military prohibited zone is determined according to the Military Prohibited Zones and Security Zones Regulation and the operational needs of the military units. The settlement areas are mostly small farming villages. Yet, the Edirne city center and İpsala and Enez townships are situated close to the border as well. These zones are non-exclusive as they frequently overlap or nest together. Yet, the levees that protect the agricultural fields and settlements from the annual floods of the Evros River are generally the boundary defining the dead zone. In the Karaağaç area, there is no such distinct boundary. Similarly, some villages in the southern part of the region are situated just next to the river border, ruling out a clear distinction between the settlement area and the military prohibited zone. Locals whose occupations or residential locations require them to enter the military prohibited zone are obliged to acquire permits. In addition to occupational reasons, mukhtars and other state personnel also have the required permits to enter the area.

The military prohibited zone permits are issued in the form of identification cards that are used in the company with the Republic of Türkiye Identity Card (Figure 5.2). They include a photograph, ID number, and occupational information of the owning person. The occupational information also regulates which administrative zones the cardholder is allowed to enter. For instance, the froggers are likely to have access to more areas as their job is not bound to a specific area whereas the paddy farmers only need access to their own plots and relevant irrigation infrastructures. I will not disclose information regarding the division of zones, but they are indicated on the card, and the ones the cardholder is not permitted are crossed out. When locals are intercepted by military personnel, they are obliged to present their card in addition to their Republic of Türkiye Identity Card. However, it should be noted that as a result of the everyday nature of commuting to these areas, the military personnel and locals develop acquaintances, which renders the showing of identity cards unnecessary in some situations.

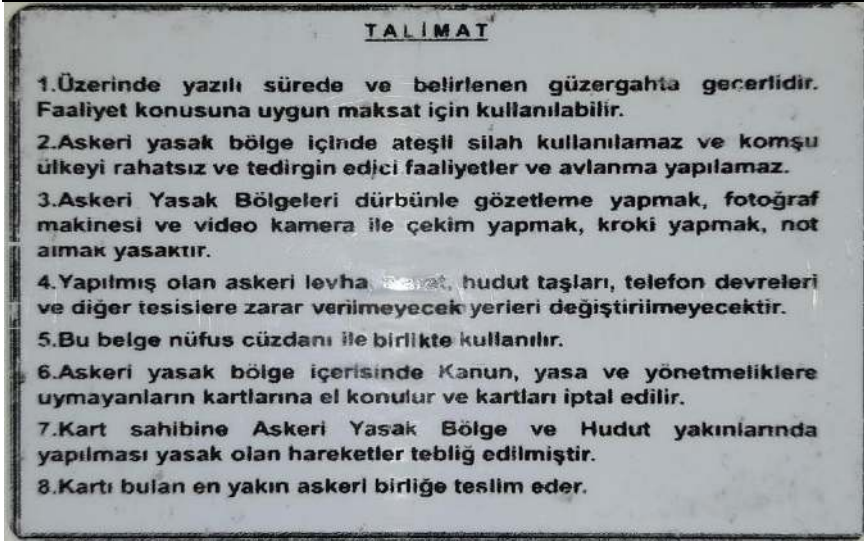


Figure 5.2: Military Prohibited Zone Identification Card (front and back). The instructions on the back state that the card can only be used in the areas indicated on the front. The card stipulates that the card can only be used for related economic purposes, and prohibits the bedevilment of the neighboring country and vandalization of border infrastructure.

The regulatory power of these cards has increased throughout the years. The respondents above 30 years old indicated that they had a rather undisturbed relation to the river 20 years ago. A respondent stated that “We used to drink water from the river. We would go to the river to collect water using copper buckets when working on the fields” (73, female, farmer). Several of the younger people aged between 30-40 also narrated that they played games by the river up to 20 years ago. The 1999 parliamentary question by the deputy of Edirne directed to the Ministry of National Defence on the problems locals face in accessing the riverside and other prohibited areas indicates a possible breaking point (Minutes of the General Assembly, 46th Session Tuesday, August 10, 1999). Although the Military Prohibited Zones and Security Zones Regulation which clearly indicates the rules of mobility in the area, dates back to 1983, the fact that such a question is directed a decade later may indicate that it was not strictly applied for a period and the regulations became stricter through time. The statements by locals increase the validity of this date.

Since the 2016 Turkish coup d'état attempt, mobility control is stricter for Turkish citizens. Holders of the Republic of Türkiye identity cards are filtered before entering the border. One reason is the attempted coup by the Gülenist Terrorist Organization. The

accused organization members who aim to take refuge in Europe to escape persecution in Türkiye try to cross the border (“Beş FETÖ Şüphelisi Sınırdan Yakalandı,” 2022). As the crossings of migrants and refugees attempting to cross to Greece are not prevented since 2020, Only Turkish citizens are filtered out whereas migrants can cross the border without hindrance from the authorities. This situation is also relevant to the daily lives of the local population since the river is utilized as a natural resource to water the livestock and irrigate the fields. According to the regulation that started to be enforced in 2020, it is forbidden to enter the area after 6 pm. However, during the hot summer months, livestock is directed to the riverside after the heat which at times coincides with the prohibited hours. A respondent stated her experience in the following way:

“You cannot take the animals to the riverside. The army is too strict for the last two years. They do not let you get near the river. Once in a while, they let you cross, but two days later they would tell you it is forbidden again. Forbidden or not, I have been watering animals here for years. Our shepherd obtained a permit. But it is still forbidden past 6. Animals lie down when it is hot. When am I supposed to water them? (female, homesteader, 65)

These cards provide a significant categorization among locals as access to the dead zone means higher mobility and awareness of the border situations. To control whether there is a difference between locals who have access cards and those who do not in their awareness of the geographical presence of the border infrastructure, I started the interviews by asking the respondent to indicate where the border is and requested to describe the border. Only three of the respondents could not indicate the correct location of the border and all three were female homesteaders without necessary documentation. The respondents who did not have access cards were less likely to provide a detailed description of the border infrastructure. During an interview interrupted by a neighbor's visit the following conversation occurred after I requested the respondent to describe the border area:

“Respondent 1: In truth, I don't know. There is a levee. I guess it is border passed that. We have Evros River, it is mutually owned. There is an island in the middle of the river and that is the border.

Researcher: Is there a fence or wall on the other side?

Respondent 1: I do not think that there is one. You are closer [to the border]. Why don't you tell him? [facing towards her neighbor]

Respondent 2: There is a fence. They built it last winter. But only in some locations. It is not throughout the river.

Respondent 1: I did not know that. So, they built a fence.”

Considering that the first respondent is not a cardholder, and the second respondent is, the conversation indicates how small the settlement is some locals do not visit the dead zone, which reduces their knowledge of the border and the legal permit and residential location is relevant for this matter. The gender difference is also significant in that matter, as the male respondents visit the riverside more frequently both for recreational and occupational reasons.

5.1.1 *Smuggling and Surveillance Practices*

The acquaintance with the landscape and the ubiquitous presence of locals in the borderland enables them to engage in the smuggling industry by providing guidance services to migrants and conducting surveillance by observation in their daily lives, which conversely supports the state's surveillance activities running against the mobility of migrants. The metaphor of Janus-face (van Houtum & Eker, 2016) best describes this situation as these contrasting practices efface some features of the border regime as they co-impose a new mobility regime that filters out persons or groups who are accused of terrorism, whereas the refugees which are perceived as a "burden" can be conveyed to Europe to draw attention to the "unfair" share of the burden on Türkiye.

Research on smuggling in the Mediterranean indicates that the industry works through a complex web of informal relations (İçduygu & Toktaş, 2022; İçduygu, 2021) Although my questionnaire did not focus on the broader logistics of the issue, the structure seems to be the similar to Ahmet İçduygu's findings with various partners located in Istanbul, Edirne that ensure the transportation between the two cities and monetary transactions. The role locals play is two-fold. The first role is guidance in the area. However, the crossings are mostly done with the guidance of actors from other nationalities who can communicate with migrants in their language. The second role is the provision of dinghies. It is indicated that:

"They cross by boat. Some bring their own boats, maybe there are also people who help them. But many of them come here knowingly and bring their own boat. Especially the ones who have tried before. Those who can't swim drown and die" (48, male, farmer and tradesman).

Among the smugglers, access to waterways is highly important as the crossings are made using dinghies. They can also collect the burst-out dinghies, repair and re-sell them to migrants. The fishermen I interviewed indicated that they find them all the time stuck on willows on the riverside. They take them to their boat to repair and sale. Another

significance of the access to waterways is that some of the refugees put their boats on the water in drainage channels and get to the river border from there. Therefore, access to such channels is practical for crossings. A respondent who engaged in the smuggling industry in the past and served time for it indicated how he utilized his farm building in the following way:

“My building [situated just next to drainage channel] was like a ticket office. They used to take their boats from me and continue their roads to Greece. I was like a ticket officer, and I would open the “gates” [making a hand gesture to indicate automatic gate barriers] after they paid me” (Identity disclosed).

As a complementary service to smuggling, the pushbacked migrants are transported to urban centers. The upsurge in the number of pushbacks at the border generated yet a new field of operation for taxi drivers. Migrants usually share taxi rides. During and after the Edirne events, the buses also carried people (Üstübcici & Karadağ, 2020). In my interviews with two taxi drivers it was indicated that migrants usually share their rides and the long-distance to Istanbul makes it a profitable business. But, they abstained from providing a detailed account. To cross-check the reliability of their accounts, I asked about the charges they apply to other interviewees. I found out that they might be understating their pricing and they decide on the pricing subjectively rather than following a fixed tariff.

Contrasting the smuggling practices that enable migrants to cross, the locals also assume a surveillance role that screens migrants. The ubiquitous presence of locals on the landscape renders them an omnipresent surveyor of the border. They can notice unfamiliar faces and profile them into categories generated through shared experience and underlying biases. Considering that the area is composed of flat rice fields, it is easy for one to detect other people and discern their identities based on their outlook, labor and location. For instance, seeing a person from afar, a farmer can identify that person on the basis that he is working in a specific field, driving a specific vehicle or wearing specific clothes. Therefore, they can also detect migrants and also come across them frequently. Then the information can be transmitted to local authorities. My respondents indicated that usually the mukhtars of the villages and local governors are informed about the presence of migrants. The skin colour, appearance, and language spoken are the main tools of categorization. Migrants from Africa and Near East are easier to detect and usually categorized either as “Arab” or “Afghan.” These categories do not only represent their respective ethnic and national identities. “*Arap*” [Arab] is a pejorative and also an ambiguously categorical word that refers to peoples of the Middle East, Western Asia,

North Africa and in some cases Africa in general. In the research area, the word is frequently used by the respondents when referring to migrants entering from the Eastern borders of Türkiye. When asked about the country of origin of the crossing migrants, interviewees mostly respond with Syria and Afghanistan. In a few of the cases, Somalia and Bangladesh are also stated. Almost all of the respondents stated that “they are coming from everywhere.” These indicate that locals are aware of the ethnic and national diversity of the migrants. Yet *arap* is used as an umbrella term to cover these diverse groups mostly with stress on Syrian and African migrants. It should also be noted that with the increasing publicity of Afghan refugees, “Afghan” started to become a category of its own in the borderland as well.

However, it should be indicated that the use of a common language was a more decisive determinant of attitude towards migrants. For instance, a female respondent who is 67 years old stated that: “They [some of the migrants] speak Turkish. They are just like us. There are Turkish speakers leading every migrant group. Most of them are actually Turkish. They are afraid of the soldiers. They ask us for directions: ‘Where is Uzunköprü, where is Keşan...?’ [In broken Turkish]” The language provided a unifying ground as it enabled them to communicate. This is also in line with the fact that communication with foreigners and a more open attitude towards them often came in tandem.

Considering that the current border regime is not prohibitory of foreign migrants’ crossings, usually, the authorities are not informed about their crossings and in cases where they are informed, the respondents indicated that the authorities fail to take a sufficient action. However, Turkish migrants are perceived as possible suspects and their mobility is surveilled hand in hand with locals. The combination of surveillance with the smuggling services supports and in some cases ensures this filtering system. The categories of migrants whose crossings are permitted provide economic benefit to locals and the information collected from surveillance activities strengthen the locals’ relationship with the authorities.

5.2 *Insecurities and Reluctant Co-habitation*

The continuous circulation of people enables locals to engage in informal guidance services to migrants, which can be considered a moderately lucrative business but also fosters an insecure environment for locals since they share their living space with them. Working in the fields at night is unsafe for most people as the constant circulation of

undocumented migrants is perceived as a threat factor. Moreover, occasionally, locals co-habituate their privately owned spaces and public spaces with migrants. This co-habitation is caused by an interesting combination of the inability of locals not to share and their moral obligation to do so. The balance of these two seemingly conflicting drives is highly personal, yet they both influence locals' (in)actions towards migrants.

A respondent who works in the field at night and early in the morning narrated the fear he experiences when he works on his farm: "I am all alone here at night. I see 4-5 men approaching, I have no idea who they are, whether they are criminals or not, or whether they will rob me. Such incidents can always happen, and I have nothing to protect myself. I built these lampposts myself to feel safer" (male, 42, civil servant). Interestingly, he did not have such a problem a few years ago. When the bridge used by the migrants to reach the crossing point was demolished by the State Hydraulic Works, they started using a new route:

"They started passing through the village, but there are dogs in the village. So, they directly pass through my field to not enter the village. They step over my produce. They also took my winter coats several times. They usually take winter coats to protect themselves from the razor blades on the wall. After I notice a coat is missing, sometimes I detect their pieces stuck on the fence."

A similar problem was also reported in the southern part of the border. However, in that case, their clothes and shoes were taken by push-backed migrants, who are usually stripped naked by the Greek border workers.

A person who was convicted of smuggling in the past narrated the story of a journalist whom he helped to cross the border and who stayed in his family house for more than a week to try for a second time. Whereas in this story he stressed their friendship developed in the meantime and how she thanked him for helping her, in another story he indicated his dislike of having to share his farmhouse with migrants by stressing the stolen belongings:

"They came at night, they were all cold and wet from the rain. I took them inside. They ate whatever food I had. When they left, I realized that my Adidas sneakers and my penny bank were missing. Since I quit smoking, I started saving coins. I had a big box filled with coins. Funnily, a friend of mine told me that one of the migrants paid him a bag full of coins to cross to the other side the day after. He thought that maybe that person was a beggar, and he collected the coins on the street. Only he did not know that they were mine!"

As the story illustrates, the drive to meet their necessities urges the migrants to provide them from the area. Similarly, during the Edirne Events, migrants collected cabbages

from the nearby fields and dismembered greenhouses to protect themselves from the rain and to warm up (Üstübici & Karadağ, 2020).

The fact that in some cases the failure to meet their needs causes the death or suffering of migrants is also acknowledged by locals. In cases where push-backed migrants break in to farm buildings, my respondents indicated that they do not inform the authorities. A respondent indicated that: “When it is rainy they enter the empty buildings they see. There are children with them. They are doing it to protect themselves. We cannot say that they made considerable damage. They do not loot; they just stay overnight” (male, 36, tradesman). Another respondent made a similar remark: “What can you do about it? It is not that they are criminals, can you leave those people to die under the rain, in the cold?” (male, 52, farmer). Similar to farm buildings, the public spaces of mosques, schools and coffee houses are co-habituated as well. During the height of the events, mosques and schools were utilized as guesthouses. A respondent who owns a coffee house described that period in the following way: “There was a big group, we hosted them in the mosque overnight. They slept on the carpets. I put my coffee house into service as a dining hall. We gave them bread. What else one can do but help? They came here without any belongings, they were hungry” (52, male)

Although the majority of the respondents framed such co-habitation practices and liminal forms of ownership as benevolent practices, we can also argue that they are unable to prevent such incidents from occurring in the first place. Moreover, some of the respondents were highly disturbed by their presence:

“The border is dangerous, there was no such danger before, the danger started when the immigration started. Migrants are on the streets from 2-3 a.m. You can't let your wife and children go somewhere on the weekend, they can't walk on the streets themselves. They [migrants] even roam around the village. These migrants have become our nightmare. There are also those among them who learned Turkish and who work as vanguards and help smugglers. They work as a middleman and take the migrants across. For example, they are more dangerous. They might enter your house at 2-3 a.m., they might knock on your door to ask for bread. People are afraid of them. It's been like this for the last 1-1.5 years. There weren't that many before” (male, 36, civil servant).

The feeling of insecurity is especially tiring for the female respondents: “We cannot go to our neighbor at night. You do not know who is outside. It is a small village, we used to know everyone. Now there are foreigners passing all the time” (female, 45, homesteader). Considering that in Türkiye the distinctions between the intimate spaces (mahrem), the street and the public spaces are highly strict, the presence of strangers in intimate spaces or the street, which can be considered a community-owned space, is not

usually welcomed. The social gender inequality and the perception of female bodies as “properties to be protected” strengthen this discontentment.

5.3 *Summary of the Inferences*

The borderland area can be divided into three distinct spaces regulating mobility. Mobility patterns of locals center the settlements and sprawl from there and are primarily shaped by institutional and occupational factors. Migrant mobility, on the other hand, took place “to” and “from” the border line. Locals benefit from these mobility patterns since their acquaintance with the area and freedom of mobility enable them to provide services to migrants. However, the incessant mobility also mounts up to insecurities for locals. They unwillingly share their agricultural buildings, coffee houses, and mosques with migrant groups. The transient nature of these encounters renders them sources of insecurity for the locals. The Edirne Events constitute a turning point with regard to these opportunities and insecurities. The number of people involved in the provision of services to migrants increased and irregular smuggling became futile. But the high numbers of migrant crossings during the Events also increased the burden on the locals and restricted their mobility.

Chapter 6:

BORDER SUFFERINGS AND POLITICS OF MORALITY

The witnessing of migrants' sufferings at the border and the feeling of pity they evoke in the locals was a common aspect of the interviews. Just as I approached to introduce my research topic to the respondents, they started narrating misfortunate instances of violent pushbacks and hardships migrants face, which are framed here as "border sufferings." The analysis of these accounts indicates that the everyday witnessing of border suffering is an inherent element of the predominant bordering practices and discourses that regulate the categories of belonging. This section will define "border sufferings" through exemplary cases and discuss the influence of witnessing border sufferings on the local's everyday life and their moral stance. Then it will discuss how the blame for sufferings is cast on European states and migrants strengthening the categorical distinctions asserted by the border.

6.1 Border Sufferings

Migrants face many difficulties on their way to Europe. The cold weather, hostile people, security officers, poverty and hostile landscape elements obstruct their movement, at times resulting in death. In the borderland area, the river creates a barrier, and the border officials take advantage of this situation to prevent irregular migration. Yet, these practices at times become violent and deadly without the necessary independent monitoring in the borderland area. The pushback practices on the Evros border involve strip searches, bursting of dinghies, use of rubber bullets and live ammunition, forceful detention, slavery, beating of migrants and forceful and illegal expulsion (Border Violence Monitoring Network, 2020a, 2020b). I refer to sufferings experienced by migrants and migrant deaths, directly or indirectly, as a result of such practices as "border sufferings." The cases in which migrants are shot to death and drowned in the river as a result of their boat being inflated with bullets constitute the direct causes. The push-backed migrants also face deadly conditions on their way back as the push-back practices frequently involve the stripping of migrants naked in cold weather, which at times causes their death indirectly. In addition, the conditions of the temporary camps during the Edirne Events also caused suffering which can be framed as border suffering. In this case, the combination of pushback activities and the abrupt change in the de-facto border regime, and the complementing channelization of migrants

to the border region, prevented migrants from accessing medical and food supplies and shelter.

The Human Rights Watch report from 2008 indicates that pushback practices on the Greek borders have a history of more than two decades (Human Rights Watch, 2008). My findings also support this as the respondents indicated that they observed such practices well before 2010. With the advent of mass communication technologies and increased publicity, the deadly results of such practices are documented better in the following period (“Meriç Nehri’ne Düşen Mülteci Donarak Hayatını Kaybetti,” 2017; “Meriç’te Türk Göçmen Faciası: Anne Bebeğine Sarılmış Halde Ölü Bulundu,” 2018; Özmen, 2018). A news article also indicates that locals observed an increase in violent pushback practices in response to the increasing number of crossings in 2018 (Yılmaz, 2018). The investigation technologies also contributed to reporting. Forensic Architecture, which recreates and documents the incidents using audio-visual evidence, has a push-back case from 2016 and another two from 2019 with explicit evidence narrating the events (*Forensic Architecture Investigations, Greece*, 2022). Furthermore, the Edirne Events draw international attention to the area, which increased the reporting and legal investigation. In line with this, the report by the Border Violence Monitoring Network explicitly states that “Such severe human rights abuses, which in many other cases encompass acts of beating and physical torture are nothing new in this northeastern region of Greece. Erdogan’s recent decision to “open the borders”, and increased media attention has only illuminated these underlying practices” (2020).

Although the pushback practices are “nothing new” of sorts, regarding the frequency and degree of suffering and the institutionalization of such practices, the Edirne Events constitute a turning point. The gathering of thousands of migrants in the borderland area created an insecure and dangerous environment for the groups of thousands. Access to food and medical supplies and shelter was a common problem (Karadağ and Üstübcü, 2020). This directed many to collect vegetables from the nearby fields and dismember parts of the nearby greenhouses to use for protection and heating. Respondents indicated that the groups that came from the border were as frequent as the ones who were walking to the other side. Violent pushback practices and sufferings continued for the following two years (Alarm Phone Demands Immediate Evacuation of Refugees from a Small Islet in the Evros River, 2022; “Hamile Göçmen, Meriç Nehri Ortasında Doğum Yaptı,” 2022). Forensic Architecture has another 3 investigations after 2020 (*Forensic Architecture Investigations, Greece*). A report indicate that Greek authorities started using migrants as

“slaves” or a front to exercise pushback practices through them (We were Slaves, 2022). However, these documented practices are not recognized by the Greek and European legal institutions. Although the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Greece is complicit in a pushback incident on the sea border and fined the country 30,000 euros, there is no such legislative action for the Evros border (European Court of Human Rights, 2022). Considering that the penalty is only a small amount, such practices are likely to continue in the absence of a discouraging penalty. Similarly, Türkiye sustains its “open border policy,” which encourages migrants to cross the border irregularly. Therefore, it can be argued that the border sufferings have been and seem to continue to become a fact of daily life in the borderland.

6.1.1 Daily Witnessing of Border Sufferings and Moral Obligation to Help

The border sufferings translate into daily witnessing of hardship situations and of plights of humanity, which evoke complicated emotions in locals. Encountering abused and beaten-up people on their way to work, finding dead bodies by the irrigation channels, and seeing traces of mistreatment in the form of ripped clothing and inflated dinghies, which are extraordinary experiences, ordinarily require them to respond, which they do not fall short of. Considering that this witnessing is a fact of daily life, it also translates into their everyday practices and discourses defining categories of belonging.

The average lowest temperature in Edirne is below zero during the winter months and is often accompanied by a downfall and strong winds. In addition, the annual floods on the Evros River prevent crossings altogether. Moreover, not knowing the floods are approaching, migrants sometimes die as a result of hypothermia. The latest incident, which caused the death of 12 migrants, was reported on February 2nd 2022, (“Edirne Sınırında 12 Mülteci Donarak Hayatını Kaybetti,” 2022). All the respondents indicated that they have witnessed groups of migrants coming back from the border with insufficient clothing and in dire conditions. Two of the respondents also indicated that they located dead bodies in the fields. A respondent narrated his experience in the following way:

“I was coming back home and saw the crime scene investigation team of gendarmerie next to an irrigation channel. Apparently, the owner of the neighboring field informed the officers. They [deceased migrants] only had thin clothes and they did not have shoes. They only had socks. Probably they crossed the water [referring to the river border]. I asked the gendarmerie if they needed help and I left.” (Male, farmer, 32)

The respondent only indicated his sorrow causally and it did not seem that he perceived the event in a traumatic way. The everyday nature of the event often confuses people as they live in that reality. However, another story as narrated by a respondent of his nephew's experience illustrates the deep impact of such events. The person in question works in the military border unit and sights dead bodies on the river:

"They keep watch by the river. He told me that the channel is becoming narrower there. He told me that they catch fish as a pastime activity. He once told me that his friends caught a big fish there, but he did not eat it. He told me 'Auntie, I did not eat that, those big fish eat the dead bodies. It is a narrow channel, so all the dead bodies come to that part.' You know they drown in the Evros [referring to migrants] their dead bodies come to that part. The big ones feed with the deceased bodies" (Female, homesteader, 54).

Concerning locals' perception of the migrant groups, the most frequent and salient approach was a feeling of pity. Such that the phrases expressing pity were almost unanimously used. For instance, "*yazık, günah!*" [What a pity! Such a misdeed!] "*hakaretlik*" [a local phrase indicating that the person is subjected to great physical and emotional injury and abuse] were such frequently used phrases. These phrases are accompanied by narratives of first-hand experiences regarding the most physical and economic injuries of the push-backed migrants. These narratives usually describe migrants after they were push-backed and present them as deprived of their phones, money, and clothes and in physically challenging situations such as freezing in cold weather with no clothes to cover themselves, wet because of either the rain or river-crossings and hungry with no food to eat.

The feeling of pity translates into humanitarian practices in most cases. The majority of the respondents indicated that they helped the migrants. However, it should be noted that some of the respondents referred to the collective practices of help rather than their personal endeavours. To control for this possibility, I further interrogated whether they helped "personally." The second part of the question did not significantly decrease the number of people who indicated that they helped. However, considering the high amount of humanitarian aid packages distributed through mukhtars and other local officials by the NGOs in the area during the Edirne Events, it is likely that the locals' contribution is less than what is indicated by the respondents. But it should also be noted that such aid packages were not distributed before the events and migrants were dependent on their own sources and the contribution from the locals to survive.

The locals' contribution, which can be regarded as humanitarian de-bordering practices involves the provision of clothing, basic food necessities, and water. A

respondent indicated the collective endeavours in the following way: “We helped people in the village. The whole village even gave their own clothes, blankets, et cetera. I came across 4-5 hungry people, I bought them bread, and I bought them food. It is enough that they pray for us. It hurts to see such a thing” (Male, teacher, 43). The collective use of mosques, coffee houses, and agricultural buildings is yet another example of such practices as indicated in the previous chapter. The language barrier is a problem in these encounters. Yet, considering the basic characteristics of such humanitarian practices, hand gestures are used by the migrants to convey their needs: “I encountered a group on the way from the field. They show me the water jug. I thought that they must be thirsty. I immediately ran into a neighbor’s house. I filled it with water, and they drank. It is such a pity to see them like that.” (Female, 53, homesteader).

The narratives of help by the respondents were framed as ethical conduct, in some cases stressing the Islamic values of help and the Turkish cultural value of hospitality. Fundamental moral senses and obligations were frequently mentioned: “Compassion and conscience are essential. When they came, the villager looked after them. Everyone brought everything from baby food to diapers, we all helped” (Male, 34, farmer). “I see them in such [dire] conditions. Is it possible not to help?” (29, female homesteader). Such statements indicating that it is almost an obligation for one to help those in need and the impossibility of pursuing an indifferent attitude demonstrate an unwilling benevolence towards refugees that do not contravene but strengthen the perception of refugees as a burden.

6.1.2 *Blaming “the Other Side”*

Framing migrants as helpless and locals themselves as helpful imply a third category of the perpetrator that is responsible for the sufferings. This categorization is sustained through a hierarchical understanding where locals’ moral position is higher than the Greek citizens, Europeans, and migrants. This hierarchical understanding is highly visible in statements centered around suffering. These statements usually narrate how Greek border authorities’ approach is “disproportionate” or beyond the pale and combines blame with an affirmation of locals’ practices as a morally superior form of behaviour:

“I was waiting for the service bus. I went down to wait for the bus. What would I see! There were around 100- 150 people. Some of them covered themselves with sacs [plastic fertilizer sacs] some with plastic bags. It was rainy and it was mud all around. So they were cold. Such an ordeal! Back then there were so many of them. I wanted to give them clothes, but we don’t have [extra] clothes anymore. We gave

them [the previous migrants] all. There are no extra clothes in the whole village. They even set up a camp here in the village. The food was provided to them. What the other side does is too much!" (45, male industrial worker)

The statement refers to a vague category of "the other side." Considering that the border in question is also a European border, it is hard to differentiate whether the other side in question refers to Greece or Europe. In addition, although this study concerns the Greek-Turkish border, the Edirne region also borders Bulgaria. As a result, Bulgarians and Greeks visiting Edirne are sometimes evaluated in the same category. Yet, the equivocality demonstrates how bordering is coupled with othering in this case to give rise to a "us vs them" framework. Within this framework, there exist diverse and at times conflicting perspectives.

The scale and context in which the "other" is understood was influential in the expressed perspectives. When asked about their relationship with the opposite side, almost all of the respondents indicated that they get along well and that they do not have any problems with the other side. They also stressed that the main cause of the problem is the politicians and not the people. Most of these statements were accompanied by statements indicating that "the other side" in question is understood at the everyday level as if they were asked about their relationship to a neighboring village or region. The similarities in daily labor or profession are a source of perceived similarity or familiarity. When asked about Greeks, a respondent (67, female farmer) stated that "They are just like us. They farm the land, cultivate and harvest. We used to work in our garden by the river. My brothers used to talk to them. They would say 'Hello neighbor!'" This pattern of perceiving daily labor as a factor of similarity and coupling positive attitudes with daily encounters at the border continued coming up in several of the interviews. Such encounters among farmers are mostly brief and distant as a result of the geographical distance between the two sides. There is also a difference in terms of gender roles. Men are more likely to communicate with the other side. The fishermen and smugglers usually have more contact and even develop long-lasting cross-border acquaintanceships. For instance, a fisherman (45) narrated how they barter on the river in the following manner:

"I have friends on the Greek side. We meet in the middle of the river, they usually need artificial fertilizers and pesticides. They say that they do not have pesticides there. [This could be caused by European agriculture regulations.] So, we give them these and they give us alcohol and cigarettes in return. [Turkish government has high taxes on these products.] But that was long ago. You can't do that now."

He also indicated that his friends speak some Turkish which is enough for them to communicate. On the other hand, almost none of the locals stated that they speak Greek.

Only a minority who have cross-border friendships indicated that they know basic phrases and words.

The positive attitude was at times followed by criticism, xenophobic and nationalist discourses. These negative attitudes were higher among the less educated and less travelled respondents. The word “gavur” is frequently used in xenophobic and nationalist discourses. “Gavur” is a derogatory word used to denote non-Muslims. Considering that religion was a determining factor in Turkish nation-building (Aktürk, 2015) the non-Muslim identity usually overlaps with the “foreigner” identity. However, research also indicates that “gavur” in the Turkish context is also used for Muslim Cypriot Turks and residents of the İzmir region as well who are perceived as Hellenized groups (Akdede & Binatlı, 2014; Ulaş, 2012). This pejorative word is used by those who indicate that they have neighborly relations with Greeks as well when the context of the interview changed. The negative perceptions and criticisms involving the word “gavur” were mostly based on moral grounds and iterated when narrating the family histories or discussing human mobility patterns in the region.

For those who migrated during the Ottoman-Russian War, the War of 93’, the violence perpetrated by Komitadji groups following their migration was another source of agonizing narratives. Komitadji groups were small rebel bands who operated in the Balkans during the final period of the Ottoman Empire. Although some of them had greater nationalist political goals at times supported by newly emerging Balkan governments, they frequently resorted to violence directed at civilians. A respondent (63, female farmer) who demonstrated strong opposition and dismay towards Greeks compared to her sisters, narrated a story to base her dismay: “The infidel [gavur] is cruel. My grand auntie used to tell me how they kidnapped young women and tortured them. They came from the other side of the river to kidnap the most beautiful girls. She told me that they put cats in women’s shalwars and hit the animal with sticks until they scratched their legs crazily. Such cruelty!” (67, female, farmer). Interestingly, her younger sister who had travelled to the Greek side and demonstrated positive attitudes towards the Greeks did not show any indication of a change of thought following the story and stated that “Oh, that was long ago.” This indicates that recalling familiar histories as remorseful events can be used as an argumentative strategy in xenophobic discourses.

For those whose families migrated after the establishment of the Republic, the focus of the responses was gratitude towards the Turkish Republic rather than dismay towards the Greek side. There was no demonstration of nostalgia about the “lost homeland” or

cross-border territorial claims based on these migration stories. There was only one instance of a story being told about the delimitation of the border which can be considered at the very bottom as an argument that could legitimize the cross-border territorial claims. Yet, the story is more about the mocking of the failure of a political leader, İsmet İnönü, rather than the border itself since it was accompanied by laughters. The story narrates that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk briefs İsmet İnönü before the Lausanne Conference on the border claims of Türkiye stating that “We claim the territory up to Karasu [Nestos River].” Yet, İsmet İnönü, who is mocked for his deafness, hears it as just a “river” [akarsu] and assumes that Atatürk referred to Evros River. As a result, the border is delimited according to the Evros River. I consider this story as a manifestation of the indifference towards to arbitrary delimitation of national territories, rather than cross-border territorial claims.

With regard to current migratory movements and the treatment of migrants by the Greek and European border security units, the respondents frequently appealed to moral arguments and pejorative words. One such phrase was “They are gavar nevertheless! What would one expect from gavar?” This phrase was used as if they are recalling or referring to experience-based communal knowledge. In these responses, the gavar identity was counterpoised to moral inferiority. Such that their Islamic morals were of a higher ground than Christian values. In some cases, the respondents used the word gavar directly when asked about their perception of the Greeks and continued to base their arguments on contemporary examples that they experienced in their everyday lives. For instance, a respondent (35, female homesteader) stated that: “Can one like gavar? As befits the name, they are gavar. You know migrants are crossing the border because there is war in Syria, in Iraq. They [Greeks] are killing them. If there were to be a war here and we wanted to cross [the border] they would stab us to death. They are not like the Turkish people. I am worried about the kids the most. I see those kids on the roads. What a shame.” Although they perceived migrants as a burden and mostly had negative perceptions of the migrants, the acts of violence by the Greeks were perceived as negative and inhumane. The push-backs and descriptions of migrants coming back from the border stripped of their valuables and clothes and those migrants who died because of cold weather were frequently made to indicate how cruel the Greeks are. Interestingly, even those respondents who have friends on the Greek side and expressed positive attitudes towards the Greeks expressed such moral criticism and applied pejorative words in nationalist contexts. Yet, in such cases, they are often coupled with phrases like “There are all types

of people everywhere. We are not [as Turks] homogenous as well. There are good people and bad people as well.” [45, male farmer] These show that moral arguments and pejorative words are used as political tools to support their criticism in the context of human mobility and strengthen the moral high ground on which they stand.

Whereas positive attitudes are mostly stated at the everyday level and personal communication, negative statements were mostly stated at the international level. For instance, one respondent stated that: “Our relation to Greece is not well right now. There are incidents in the Mediterranean as well. We do not have any problems with them actually. It is big dogs, France and Egypt, who stir up the trouble. So, they [Greeks] don’t have problems with us. Why are their soldiers tightening the controls? Because of the migrants. [Not because we have a political situation]” (male, farmer, 49) Other respondents echoed this statement by indicating that they have good neighborly relations but there occur international problems stirred up by foreign actors. Yet, locals supporting nationalistic ideologies often blurred such distinctions in their statements. A respondent’s anecdote demonstrates the underlying biases which surface in an argumentative state:

The Greeks are very cruel, in every way. They rob, and take migrants’ money. They are doing every evil so that migrants will not pass. There are no human rights in Greece anyway. They do not call them “gavur” for no reason. They go by the name of the European Union, but Europe is all the same. They shoot, they rob. It is always Turkish people who save the migrants. Is there any rescue from the Arabs? They pretend to be Muslims. The king of Saudi Arabia is Jewish anyways. I’m afraid the more I look at him, the more he looks like a Jew. Is he a Muslim? A Muslim should help everyone. In other words, the Turk has no friend other than the Turk. There is nothing better than a hard-working Turkish (47, male, farmer).

Although the European Union and Greece are perceived as the culprits of border suffering, some statements were accompanied by criticism and marginalization of migrants as well. The most expressed criticism revolves around the idea that one should defend their homeland. This discursive argument is constructed by placing the search for economic interests morally below one’s loyalty to their homeland. One part of the argument is that the reason for migration is the search for more earnings and a higher quality of life. This is usually stated as “They [migrants] say that they are going to Europe to become rich, to earn more money.” One respondent narrated his conversation with a refugee who lived in Türkiye for seven years and who was push-backed after he attempted to cross:

“He says that he is a resident of Manisa for seven years. [It should be noted that “Manisa/lı” indicates that that person is not just living in Manisa but a local as locals would call themselves Edirne/lı.] He had a family home, children and everything. [He says that] He spent 6 thousand liras to come here. He got robbed

and came back [from Greece] I said to him ‘Brother, why wouldn’t you stay at your home?’ [He says that] it is better there, the money is much there. That money is much here. It is the same money there. [Indicating the differences in currency]” (55, male farmer)

The story also illustrates that they perceive it acceptable and normal for migrants to continue living in Türkiye as they already built a life here. Similar expressions are indicated as well referring to the hardship of migration compared to continuing their lives here and working harder here instead of searching for more money in Europe.

The second part of the discourse places loyalty to one’s homeland as a moral duty. This is mostly expressed by respondents with more nationalist perspectives. By stating that they escape from the war, they disparage their moral standing. One young male respondent also stated that “I would defend my country no matter what” (19, male, farmer) as he was criticizing Syrian refugees. Yet, a considerable part of the respondents found it understandable that they are trying to protect their lives and their families because it is a responsibility to protect children.

In one settlement an incident is frequently narrated to build the ground for the dismay of migrants:

“We gave them food. We provided a place for them to sleep. But they [villagers] say that they slept on bread. They spread the bread and slept on them. Would one do such a thing? That’s a sin! [I know that] there are all kinds of people. But they are lazy. Can one leave their native land? They came here to seek more money. They suffer here in the end. They die here as well.” (48, female domestic worker).

Although another respondent indicated that it is possible that they were just saving the bread for later, the incident is still considered a plausible ground to lament the migrants. The perception of migrants as unappreciative also resonates with the idea that migrants are going to Europe to gain profits and acquire higher life standards and presupposes migrants as greedy people. The greediness justifies the suffering migrants experience since they try to cross the border knowingly. This perception also implies a superficial understanding of push and pull factors.

6.2 The Hero and the Criminal: Rivalry for the Moral Ground

The de facto opening of the borders changed the context in which the smuggling industry works significantly. The locals who engaged in migrant guidance activities or crossed the border irregularly for other purposes were legally punished in the past and the people who provided such services were criminalized. Yet, with the unilateral opening of the border, particular activities were decriminalized. Moreover, the change in border

governance reframed the smuggling practice as ethical conduct. Following Line Richter's concept, I analyze smuggling practices as moral borderwork which carries opposing connotations on both sides of the border. It should be noted that in the Turkish context, the change in ascribed morality is only a recent phenomenon and the 2020 Edirne Events constitute a turning point in this regard.

A respondent who engaged in the smuggling industry in the past described the abrupt change in the perception of smuggling in the following way: "They would put you in the prison for this. Now everyone is free to do it. Smugglers are the heroes now" (identity disclosed). The abrupt change here refers to Edirne Events in which both locals and state officials worked together to document and prevent pushback activities by the Greek side. According to the statement by the Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu, the government placed a thousand special operation police forces on the border region to prevent pushback practices of Frontex and Greek authorities ("İçişleri Bakanı Soylu: Geri İtmeleri Engellemek İçin Meriç Sınırına Bin Özel Harekat Polisi Getireceğiz," 2020). In his statement, the minister frames Türkiye's position as the country with the greatest burden and stresses the failure of the EU institutions to document and punish the violent pushback practices. By doing so, he claims the moral ground through an image of Europe as a hypocritical hegemon that forces Türkiye to abide by the rules that a European country, Greece, is not abiding by. He gives examples of how Greek and European authorities torture migrants and compares them with Türkiye's approach, which he frames as a unilateral decision to stop cooperating for the prevention of irregular migration. He explains Türkiye's policy in the following way: "If people want to cross, we tell them 'you may cross, we are not preventing'" (İçişleri Bakanı Soylu: Geri itmeleri engellemek için Meriç sınırına bin özel harekat polisi getireceğiz, 2020). Türkiye's position according to the minister's argument can be considered an act of disobedience, rather than a facilitation of irregular migration, which continues to exist regardless of Türkiye's policies.

However, on the European side, the policy is framed as facilitation of "illegal" migration to Europe (Jamieson, 2020). Their claims are based on the initiative of local governments to provide public transportation services to migrants wanting to cross the border and encouragement and, in some cases, force migrants in removal centers to translocate to the border area (Al-Aswad, 2020). The Greek authorities frame Türkiye's practices as "weaponizing of migrants" (*Greece: Turkey Trying to 'Weaponize Migration' with Latest Evros Incident*, 2022; "Turkey Pushed Migrants into Greece,

Commented [OI1]: ref

Minister Say,” 2022). The framing of the issue as such derives from the idea that irregular border crossings constitute a crime. According to Richter, the smugglers are perceived as “antagonists” of European border security and present a threat to the internal security of the EU. Based on the idea of local moralities, Richter indicates that smugglers are not perceived as such by the migrants who want to cross. On the contrary, “In the migrants’ lives, fear was mainly generated by policing practices rather than by migrant smugglers” (p.16). Such that, “the labour around borders is also moral and wrought with invocations of a mixture of sentiments which can be very differently configured depending on where we choose to focus” (p.16)

The Edirne Events is a unique case as the migrant’s perspective is taken into the center when framing the moral configuration through which smuggling practices are perceived. The change in the perception of smugglers in the local context echoes this perspective. According to the respondents, the smugglers were despised in the past and their practices are perceived as illegal and morally wrong. The moral part regarded the Islamic principle of “rightful share.” According to this perspective, a person cannot take more wealth and money than he is right to acquire. The smuggling practices in this period involved overcharging migrants because of the legal dangers of the work. Moreover, the practice of leaving migrants in the rural parts of Edirne without getting them across the border was also frequent. Both of these practices go against the principle of rightful share and are despised by the locals because of this reason. Moreover, smuggling is also perceived as an “easy money job” which is looked down on according to the strong work ethics of the rural migrants descend locals. The despisal also manifests itself in the social relations within the borderland settlements. The persons whose participation in the industry is publicly known tended to be communicated less by the rest of the residents. One of my respondents indicated that they used to sit separately in the village coffee house (male, 23, student)

The change in the government policy transformed the perception of smugglers by the locals and their actions are framed as “help.” However, it should also be noted that the practices also changed in that the migrants are charged less or not charged at all as a result of the change in the policy framework. Since the facilitation of crossings is not criminalized, the number of people involved in smuggling increased. As a result of the increasing supply, the prices of smuggling services decreased for a short period from 1,000 euros in 2019 to 5 euros in 2020 (“Kaçakçılar: 100 TL Vereni Yunanistan’a Geçiriyoruz,” 2020; “Needing to Use Migrant Smuggling Services as a Position of

Vulnerability,” 2019). In addition to these, several incidents in which boatmen, police and NGO workers protected the migrants from shootings and pushbacks shaped public opinion in a way that elevated such re-bordering practices (“Meriç Nehri’nde Mahsur Kalan Göçmenleri AFAD Kurtard,” 2020; “Özel Harekat Engelledi, Yunan Polisi Seyretti,” 2020). As an example, a respondent showed me a video of a boatman saving a migrant woman and her baby from the fire opened by the Greek authorities (54, male). He praised the initiative of the boatman as heroic since he put his own life in danger as he crossed the river to take a push-backed mother and infant. Another respondent also mentioned the incident and stated that “the district governor thanked the boatman for his heroic action” (22, male). Interestingly, the same boatman was taken under custody for engaging in smuggling, which presents a counternarrative in which the Turkish government continues to control and manage irregular migration.

The words used to refer to smugglers is also demonstrative for the changing perspective towards smugglers. The words “*arapçı*” [-çı is usually added to names of goods to derive words denoting the seller of that good] and “*kaçakçı*” [*kaçak*: fugitive, leakage; *kaçakçı*: smuggler] are used to refer to smugglers and guides in negative terms. On the other hand, *kayıkçı* [boatman] has a more tangential and implicit usage that has a rather neutral stance to smuggling. The people in the industry have more precise words to refer to particular roles. For instance, the person escorting the car carrying the migrants is referred to as *rehber* [guide]. The usage of these terms was significant for the analysis of the changing perception towards people who engaged in smuggling.

6.3 Summary of the Inferences

The analysis indicates that the border sufferings play a central role in the political rivalry for the moral high ground. The way locals framed the sufferings which they experience on a daily basis helped them legitimize their practices and discourses of de- and re-bordering. The moral justifications were in parallel with the central government's policy vis-a-vis Europe. However, the blaming was not limited to the European Union member countries and Greece in particular, but also involved marginalizing discourses regarding migrants. The political rivalry is not yet translated into social tensions between Greek and Turkish citizens. On the contrary, most of the respondents indicated that they have neighborly relations and that they do not cast blame upon Greek citizens in particular.

Chapter 7:
CONCLUSION

This thesis contributes to the growing literature on borders and responds to the acute need for fieldwork on the Greece-Türkiye land border, a border that is much discussed but left under-researched. Taking the 2020 Edirne Events as a turning point for the border regime, it presents how locals' practices and discourses sustain the border and how locals' everyday life in return gets influenced by the change in mobility patterns prescribed by the change in border regime. By conceptualizing the research area as a borderscape, it portrays the mobility patterns and co-habitation practices at the Greek borderland of Türkiye through the nexus of (in)security and (im)mobility. In this regard, it is primarily a descriptive study that aims at designating new research foci and submitting the empirical data collected from the fieldwork for the service of new research. Yet, it exceeds the limitations of a descriptive study by controlling the influence of the "opening" of the border on the daily lives of locals.

The results indicate that locals play an essential role in the border. Their daily practices, which involve smuggling and humanitarian practices, enable migrants to circumvent institutional barriers preventing their mobility. Migrant mobility does not only bring a modicum of economic opportunities for locals but also generates insecurities by forcing locals to adopt a new ownership regime where they unwillingly share their living spaces with migrants. With regard to the influence of the 2020 Edirne Events, the findings demonstrate that smuggling and migrant guidance, which are conceptualized as re-bordering practices in the thesis, adopted into the new "open border" by acquiring moral properties overshadowing their political and economic attributes. The new moral properties of smuggling were incorporated into a dichotomous understanding that downplays the cross-border cooperation and complicity in border sufferings and puts the blame on "the other side" of the border. The humanitarian practices of locals are set up against the violent bordering practices of the "blameful side." Lastly, the thesis asserts that, by transforming locals' perception of others, border sufferings take a central part in the narratives designating Greek and European border officials and institutions as antagonists. Everyday witnessing of harsh treatment of migrants provides a justifying ground for locals' de- and re-bordering practices.

Local's experiences and practices hold a special place in border studies as a result of the "vernacular turn" that redefined the role of states and individuals in sustaining

political borders. The findings support the idea that a vernacular perspective is a must to study borders in their totality since borders are not only sustained through state-to-state interaction but through cohesive and/or antithetical work of state and non-state actors. The thesis also connects the everyday level with the international level where the migration and border policy of the EU, which is denounced as a form of neo-imperialist mode of governance, is challenged by Türkiye. Although it does not include a detailed analysis in the international level, the findings of the thesis complement the arguments of other such analyses and indicate that moral rivalry between the EU and Türkiye is echoed at the local level. Yet, the moral rivalry does not outweigh the perception of Greek citizens as “good neighbors” but is perceived as a game in the higher politics that primarily concerns state-to-state relations.

The current border studies literature focuses on developing a nuanced understanding of borders rather than following a normative stance that superficially categorizes borders and their interaction with wider social and political phenomena. It is demanding to develop such an understanding in an area that is undergoing transformation and with the help of little, and mostly inconsistent, data to steer my perspective. I faced such difficulties especially when framing the research and deciding what is worth studying. Another prominent issue was to impose an analytical framework on the constantly changing social world using a vague concept with blurred limits. Yet, I overcame these problems by instrumentalizing that very same vagueness which leaves a great room for the ethnographic data to speak for itself. Such that, I could present a wide array of information on the border which are vital for future research to build on. Therefore, the nuanced analysis and representation presented by this thesis can be considered a precursor to future studies analyzing both the everyday life at this peculiar border and the peculiarities of the border itself, starting with the abrupt regime change in 2020.

Considering that it is likely for other neighbors of Europe to follow similar bargaining strategies instrumentalizing migratory pressure to European borders, it is highly important to understand the relationship between the regime change and everyday practices, which are studied as inherent elements within the scope of this thesis. Therefore, it would be fruitful to study how regime change influenced the practices and perceptions of other bordering actors, for instance, border officials, and how they adapted to the new regime. Most importantly, the Greek side of the border, which this study excluded should be researched to be able to control for the validity of the findings and present an opportunity for an in-depth comparison. I tried to circumvent this lack, which

might have jeopardized the objectivity and validity of the thesis, by including an introspective process where I tried to understand how my perception and observance as a researcher are shaped and the reasons that directed me to conduct this research. As I delved into the literature, I reviewed findings from both the empirical research and introspection with new theoretical lenses. So, it can be argued that my background as a local rendered it harder for me to assume an objective distance. But it helped me in reaching the research area and subjects. Moreover, it helped me develop a more nuanced understanding that compliments the manifoldness and richness of the research subject that was left understudied so far. By providing an analysis of locals' experiences and practices of the border(ing), I tried to present this richness.

The thesis came into being after 3 years of dedicated work starting with the preliminary fieldwork in 2019. Since then, the border went through a considerable change and it can be expected that the current situation will pave the way for further conflicts. Although these developments are manifestations of part of the de-Europeanization of Türkiye and straining diplomacy between Greece and Türkiye, they also possess particular characteristics rendering the border a *sui generis* case within the frame of European border management. Both the timely importance and unique characteristics of the border entail further research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agnew, J. (1994). The territorial trap: The geographical assumptions of international relations theory. *Review of International Political Economy*, 1(1), 53–80.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09692299408434268>
- Akdede, S. H., & Binatlı, O. (2014). The social status of migrants in Turkey. *International Journal of Manpower*.
- Aksu, F. (2022). *Turkish Greek Relations*.
[Http://Www.turkishgreek.Org/Index.Php/Kuetuephane/Indirilebilir-Kaynaklar/Category/19-1926-Turkey-Greece-Boundary-Agreement](http://www.turkishgreek.org/index.php/kuetuephane/indirilebilir-kaynaklar/category/19-1926-turkey-greece-boundary-agreement).
- Akturk, S. (2015). Religion and Nationalism: Contradictions of Islamic Origins and Secular Nation-Building in Turkey, Algeria, and Pakistan*. *Social Science Quarterly*, 96(3), 778–806. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12191>
- Alarm Phone demands immediate evacuation of refugees from a small islet in the Evros river. (2022, June 10). <https://alarmphone.org/en/2022/06/10/alarm-phone-demands-immediate-evacuation-of-refugees-from-a-small-islet-in-the-evros-river/>
- Al-Aswad, H. (2020, February 29). Buses in Istanbul transport refugees from Turkey to border with Greece for free, 2020. *Middle East Eye*.
- Angeli, D., Triandafyllidou, A., & Dimitriadi, A. (2014). Assessing the Cost-effectiveness of Irregular Migration Control Policies in Greece. *MIDAS Policy Paper*, 1–16. <http://www.eliamap.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PRINT-MIDAS-Policy-Paper-EN.pdf%0Apapers3://publication/uuid/790D835D-8616-47CF-A10C-71151BE4CF5F>
- Baldwin-Edwards, M. (2017). Migration between Greece and Turkey: from the ‘Exchange of Populations’ to the non-recognition of borders. *Migration Waves in Eastern Europe [1990-2015]*, 141–150. <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845279398-141>
- Balibar, E. (2002a). Politics and the Other Scene. *Capital & Class*, 30(1), 153–155.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/030981680608800115>
- Balibar, E. (2002b). World Borders, Political Borders. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 117(1), 68–78.
<https://doi.org/10.1632/003081202x63519>

- Balibar, É. (2009). *We, the People of Europe?* (Vol. 148). Princeton University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400825783>
- Bayraktar, H. (2006). The anti-jewish pogrom in eastern thrace in 1934: New evidence for the responsibility of the Turkish government. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(2), 95–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600634238>
- Beş FETÖ şüphelisi sınırda yakalandı. (2022, August 31). *TRT Haber*.
<https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/5-feto-suphelisi-sinirda-yakalandi-705217.html>
- Bhattacharya, K., & Kim, J. H. (2020). Reworking Prejudice in Qualitative Inquiry With Gadamer and De/Colonizing Onto-Epistemologies. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 26(10), 1174–1183. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418767201>
- Bigo, D. (2014). The (in)securitization practices of the three universes of EU border control: Military/Navy - border guards/police - database analysts. *Security Dialogue*, 45(3), 209–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614530459>
- Bitti, E. (2020, March 27). Pazarkule boşaltıldı. *Edirne Gündem*.
<http://www.gundemdirne.com/detay/5610-pazarkule-bosaltildi.html>
- Border Violence Monitoring Network. (2020a). *Balkan Region Report - February 2020*.
- Border Violence Monitoring Network. (2020b). *Balkan Region Report - March 2020*.
- Brambilla, C. (2015). Exploring the critical potential of the borderscapes concept. *Geopolitics*, 20(1), 14–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2014.884561>
- Brambilla, C. (2016). Navigating the Euro/African border and migration nexus through the borderscapes lens: Insights from the LampedusaInFestival. In C. Brambilla, J. Laine, & G. Bocchi (Eds.), *Borderscapes: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315569765>
- Brambilla, C. (2020). Revisiting ‘Bordering, Ordering and Othering’: An Invitation to ‘Migrate’ Towards A Politics of Hope. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 112(1), 11–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12424>
- Brambilla, C., & Jones, R. (2020). Rethinking borders, violence, and conflict: From sovereign power to borderscapes as sites of struggles. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 38(2), 287–305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775819856352>
- Buoli, A. (2015). *BorderScaping An explorative study on the North Moroccan / Spanish border landscapes*. Politecnico Milano.

- Casas-Cortes, M., Cobarrubias, S., & Pickles, J. (2010). Stretching Borders Beyond Sovereign Territories? Mapping EU and Spain's Border Externalization Policies. *Geopolitica*, 2(1), 71–90. <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/398831/>
- Casas-Cortes, M., Cobarrubias, S., & Pickles, J. (2016). 'Good neighbours make good fences': Seahorse operations, border externalization and extra-territoriality. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(3), 231–251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776414541136>
- Corley, K., Bansal, P., & Yu, H. (2021). An editorial perspective on judging the quality of inductive research when the methodological straightjacket is loosened. *Strategic Organization*, 19(1), 161–175. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127020968180>
- Çoruh, H. (2018). Osmanlı Devleti'nde Nehir Islahı Ve Taşkın Organizasyonu. *Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(12), 167–185. <https://doi.org/10.17822/omad.2018.105>
- Cossé, E. (2013, July 9). Xenios Zeus: hard times in Greece. *Open Democracy*. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/xenios-zeus-hard-times-in-greece/>
- Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: 18 bin düzensiz göçmen sınırı geçti, kapıları kapatmayacağız. (2020, February 29). *TRT Haber*. <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-18-bin-duzensiz-gocmen-siniri-gecti-kapilari-kapatmayacagiz-463917.html>
- Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Kapıları açtık bundan sonraki süreçte de kapatmayacağız. (2020, February 29). *Hürriyet*. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-kapilari-actik-bundan-sonraki-surecte-de-kapatmayacagiz-41458102>
- Danış, D. (2011). Changing fortunes: Iraqi refugees in Turkey. *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies*, 5(2), 199–213. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcis.5.2.199_1
- de Genova, N. (2013). Spectacles of migrant "illegality": The scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(7), 1180–1198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.783710>
- Debord, G. (2012). *Society Of The Spectacle*. Bread and Circuses Publishing. https://books.google.com.tr/books?hl=tr&lr=&id=yPhuCwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT2&dq=society+spectacle+debord&ots=ViaesEbO3T&sig=ALzWS7LdHoO0Mb5RKXyKIoDSeQw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=society%20spectacle%20debord&f=false

- Dell'Agnese, E. (2015). New Geo-graphies of Border(land)-scapes. In C. Brambilla, J. Laine, & G. Bocchi (Eds.), *Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*. Routledge.
- Dell'Agnese, E., & Szary, A. L. A. (2015). Borderscapes: From border landscapes to border aesthetics. *Geopolitics*, 20(1), 4–13.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2015.1014284>
- Demirtaş, M. (2009). Kırım Savaşı ve 93 Harbi Sürecinde Osmanlı Memleketine Gelen Göçmenlerin Sevk ve İskânları. *Journal of Turkish Research Institute*, 16(41), 215–238. <https://doi.org/10.14222/Turkiyat971>
- Edirne sınırında 12 mülteci donarak hayatını kaybetti. (2022, February 2). *Bianet*.
<https://m.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/257136-edirne-sinirinda-12-multeci-donarak-hayatini-kaybetti>
- European Court of Human Rights. (2022, July 7). *Violations of the Convention in a case concerning the sinking of a migrant boat*.
- Evans, D., & Coskun, O. (2020, February 27). Turkey says it will let refugees into Europe after its troops killed in Syria. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-idUSKCN20LOGQ>
- Fall, J. J. (2010). Artificial states? On the enduring geographical myth of natural borders. *Political Geography*, 29(3), 140–147.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/J.POLGEO.2010.02.007>
- Fallon, K. (2020, October 24). EU border force “complicit” in illegal campaign to stop refugees landing. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/oct/24/eu-border-force-complicit-in-campaign-to-stop-refugees-landing>
- Fischer, E. (1949). On Boundaries. *World Politics*, 1(2), 196–222.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2008843>
- Forensic Architecture Investigations, Greece*. (2022, August 6). <https://Forensic-Architecture.Org/Location/Greece>.
- Franko, K. (2021). The two-sided spectacle at the border: Frontex, NGOs and the theatres of sovereignty. *Theoretical Criminology*, 25(3), 379–399.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13624806211007858>
- Gadalla, P. (2020, March 26). Turkey’s track record of weaponising refugees. *Ekathimerini*. <https://www.ekathimerini.com/opinion/251025/turkey-s-track-record-of-weaponising-refugees/>

- Göktepe, K. (2019). Sosyoekonomik Yönleriyle Osmanlı Devleti'nde Göç ve Kültürel Etkileşim: Edirne Vilayeti Örneği (1856-1914). In M. M. İlhan & A. Orhan (Eds.), *Migration and Cultural Interaction* (pp. 219–239).
- Greece suspends asylum applications as migrants seek to leave Turkey. (2020, March 1). *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-51695468>
- Greece: Turkey trying to 'weaponize migration' with latest Evros incident. (2022, August 17). *Ekathimerini*. <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1191280/greece-turkey-trying-to-weaponize-migration-with-latest-evros-incident/>
- Greece/EU: Allow New Arrivals to Claim Asylum. (2020, March 10). *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/10/greece/eu-allow-new-arrivals-claim-asylum>
- Hamile göçmen, Meriç Nehri ortasında doğum yaptı. (2022, August 3). *Milliyet*. <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/hamile-gocmen-meric-nehri-ortasinda-dogum-yapti-6801078>
- Holloway, R. L. (1967). Review Reviewed Work (s): The Territorial Imperative : A Personal Inquiry into the Animal Origins of Property and Nations . by Robert Ardrey Review by : Ralph L . Holloway Jr . Source : Political Science Quarterly , Vol . 82 , No . 4 (Dec . , 1967) , pp . *Political Science Quarterly* , 82(4), 630–632. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2148087%0D>
- Human Rights Watch. (2008). *Stuck in a Revolving Door Iraqis and Other Asylum Seekers and Migrants at the Greece/Turkey Entrance to the European Union*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/11/26/stuck-revolving-door/iraqis-and-other-asylum-seekers-and-migrants-greece/turkey>
- İçduygu, A., & Aksel, D. (2012). *Irregular Migration in Turkey*.
- İçduygu, A., & Sert, D. (2015). The Changing Waves of Migration from the Balkans to Turkey: A Historical Account. In *Migration in the Southern Balkans: From Ottoman Territory to Globalized Nation States* (pp. 85–104). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-13719-3_5
- İçişleri Bakanı Soylu: Geri itmeleri engellemek için Meriç sınırına bin özel harekat polisi getireceğiz. (2020, March 5). *Anadolu Haber Ajansı*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/icisleri-bakani-soylu-geri-itmeleri-engellemek-icin-meric-sinirina-bin-ozel-harekat-polisi-getirecegiz/1755486>

- IOM. (2020, March 1). *More than 13,000 Migrants Reported Along the Turkish-Greek Border*. <https://www.iom.int/news/more-13000-migrants-reported-along-turkish-greek-border>
- Jamieson, A (2020, March 4). Turkish people-smugglers operate in plain sight on Greek border. *Euronews*. <https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/04/turkish-people-smugglers-operate-in-plain-sight-on-greek-border>.
- Jones, R., & Johnson, C. (2016). *Placing the Border in Everyday Life*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315600659>
- Kaçakçılar: 100 TL vereni Yunanistan'a geçiriyoruz. (2020, March 3). *Duvar*. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2020/03/03/kacakcilar-100-tl-vereni-yunanistana-geciriyoruz>
- Karacan, A. N. (2009). *Lozan* (H. Turgut, Ed.). Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Karadağ, S. (2019). Extraterritoriality of European borders to Turkey: an implementation perspective of counteractive strategies. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0113-y>
- Karadağ, S. (2022). Floodgate Politics. In A. Dastyari, A. Nethery, & A. Hirsch (Eds.), *Refugee Externalisation Policies* (p. 14). Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003167273>
- Kireev, A. A., & Yachin, S. E. (2017). Paradigms of Border Studies and the Metacultural Approach. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 34(3), 395–412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2017.1344563>
- Kirisci, K. (2004). *Reconciling refugee protection with efforts to combat irregular migration : the case of Turkey and the European Union*. 5–20.
- Kirisci, K. (2007). Border Management and EU-Turkish Relations : Convergence or Deadlock. *Carim*.
- Kokkinidis, T. (2020, March 10). Bulgaria Floods Evros River to Prevent Migrants Storming Greek Borders. *Greek Reporter*. <https://greekreporter.com/2020/03/10/bulgaria-floods-evros-river-to-prevent-migrants-storming-greek-borders/>
- Kolossov, V. (2015). Introduction to Border Studies. In *Introduction to Border Studies*.
- Kostanick, H. L. (1955). Turkish Resettlement of Refugees from Bulgaria , 1950-1953. *Middle East Journal*, 9(1), 41–52. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4322664>

- Krichker, D. (2021). Making Sense of Borderscapes: Space, Imagination and Experience. *Geopolitics*, 26(4), 1224–1242.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1683542>
- Meriç Nehri'nde mahsur kalan göçmenleri AFAD kurtardı. (2020, February 2). *Hürriyet*. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/meric-nehrinde-mahsur-kalan-gocmenleri-afad-kurtardi-41459254>
- Meriç Nehri'ne düşen mülteci donarak hayatını kaybetti. (2017, December 19). *İleri Haber*. <https://ilerihaber.org/icerik/meric-nehrine-dusen-multeci-donarak-hayatini-kaybetti-80116.html>
- Meriç'te Türk göçmen faciası: Anne bebeğine sarılmış halde ölü bulundu. (2018, July 21). *Euronews*. <https://tr.euronews.com/2018/07/21/meric-nehrinde-turk-gocmenleri-tasiyan-bot-alabora-oldu>
- Midlarsky, M. I. (1974). Power, Uncertainty, and the Onset of International Violence. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 18(3), 395–431.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002200277401800303>
- Minghi, J. v. (1963). Boundary Studies in Political Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 53(3), 407–428.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1963.tb00457.x>
- Needing to use migrant smuggling services as a position of vulnerability. (2019, June 30). *International Centre for Migration Policy Development*.
- Newman, D., & Paasi, A. (1998). Fences and neighbours in the postmodern world: Boundary narratives in political geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 22(2), 186–207. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913298666039113>
- Önder, S., & Acarlioğlu, A. (2017). The Population Exchange Between Turkey and Greece After the First World War and the Subsequent Problems. In A. Barker, M. E. Pereira, M. T. Cortez, P. A. Pereira, & O. Martins (Eds.), *Personal Narratives, Peripheral Theatres: Essays on the Great War (1914–18)* (pp. 215–223).
- Özel harekat engelledi, Yunan polisi seyretti. (2020, March 18). *NTV*.
<https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/ozel-harekat-engelledi-yunan-polisi-seyretti.K0B4oj4hGEyZn2ftd1WLxA>
- Özlem, K. (2019). Bulgaristan - Yunanistan Nüfus Mübadelesi İle Türkiye-Yunanistan Nüfus Mübadelesi Arasındaki Etkileşimin Değerlendirilmesi. *International Journal of Social Inquiry*, 12(1), 219–238.
<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ijisi/issue/46304/582073>

- Özmen, E. (2018, December 4). Yunanistan'ın geri gönderdiği 3 kaçak, donarak ölmüş bulundu. *Hürriyet*.
- Paasi, A. (2012). A border theory: An unattainable dream or a realistic aim for border scholars? *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, 2011, 11–31.
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2015). The humanitarian politics of european border policing: Frontex and border police in evros. *International Political Sociology*, 9(1), 53–69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ips.12076>
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2016). Hotspots and the politics of humanitarian control and care. *Society and Space*, di, 1–18. <http://societyandspace.org/2016/12/06/hotspots-and-the-politics-of-humanitarian-control-and-care/>
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2017a). humanitarian borderwork. *Border Politics*, 85–103. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-46855-6>
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2017b). Humanitarian Rescue/Sovereign Capture and the Policing of Possible Responses to Violent Borders. *Global Policy*, 8(February), 19–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12401>
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2018). Hotspots and the geographies of humanitarianism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 026377581875488. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775818754884>
- Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2019). Médecins Sans Frontières and the Practice of Universalist Humanitarianism. *Open Borders*, 141–155. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22nmc35.13>
- Parker, N., & Vaughan-Williams, N. (2009). Lines in the sand? towards an agenda for critical border studies. *Geopolitics*, 14(3), 582–587. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040903081297>
- Perera, S. (2007). A Pacific zone?(In) security, sovereignty, and stories of the Pacific borderscape. In P. K. Rajaram & C. Grundy-Warr (Eds.), *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics and Territory's Edge* (pp. 201–227). University of Minnesota Press.
- Pirinççi, V., Gökgün, P. E., & İsal, M. C. (2020). Edirne - Pazarkule Saha Durum Raporu. *Hayata Destek Derneği*, 1–4. <https://multeci.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/200302-Hayata-Destek.pdf>
- Pınar, M. (2017). 1950-1951 Bulgaristan'dan Türkiye'ye Göçler Ve Demokrat Parti'nin Göçmen Politikası. *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 30(89), 61–94.

- Pötzsch, H. (2015). The emergence of iBorder: Bordering bodies, networks, and machines. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 33(1), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d14050p>
- Pötzsch, H., & Brambilla, C. (2015, May 5). Iborder, Borderscapes, Bordering: A Discussion between Holger Pötzsch and Chiara Brambilla. *Society and Space*. <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/iborder-borderscapes-bordering>
- Prescott, J. R. v. (2014). *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315747965>
- Rancatore, J. P. (2010). It is strange: A reply to Vraiti. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 39(1), 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829810370938>
- Richter, L. (2021). Moral Borderwork: Policies, Policing, and Practices of Migrant Smuggling at the EU-Morocco Border. *Geopolitics*, 00(00), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2021.1953477>
- Rumford, C. (2008). Introduction: Citizens and borderwork in Europe. *Space and Polity*, 12(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562570801969333>
- Rumford, C. (2012). Towards a multiperspectival study of borders. *Geopolitics*, 17(4), 887–902. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2012.660584>
- Rumford, C. (2013). Towards a Vernacularized Border Studies: The Case of Citizen Borderwork. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 28(2), 169–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2013.854653>
- Rumford, C. (2014). Cosmopolitan Borders. In *Cosmopolitan Borders*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137351401>
- Schellig, A., & Kramer, A. (2011). Meric River Basin: Transboundary Water Cooperation at the Border between the EU and Turkey. In *Turkey's Water Policy* (pp. 229–249).
- Spykman, N. J. (1942). Frontiers, Security, and International Organization Author (s): Nicholas John Spykman. *Geographical Review*, 32(3), 436–447.
- Starr, H. (1975). Coalitions and Future War-Dyadic Study of Cooperation and Conflict. *Sage Professional Paper in International Studies Series*, 3, 5–71.
- Starr, H., & Most, B. A. (1978). A Return Journey: Richardson, “Frontiers” and Wars in The 1946–1965 Era. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 22(3), 441–467. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200277802200306>

- Starr, H., & Most, B. A. (1983). Contagion and Border Effects on Contemporary African Conflict. *Comparative Political Studies*, 16(1), 92–117.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414083016001004>
- Stock, I., Üstübeci, A., & Schultz, S. U. (2019). Externalization at work: responses to migration policies from the Global South. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0157-z>
- Tallis, B. (2021). Operationalising the borderscape: making sense of proliferating (in)securities and (im)mobilities. *International Politics*, 59(3), 410–427.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-021-00280-w>
- Teunissen, P., & Koutrolidou, P. (2022). Echoes of Imperialism: Crisis, Conflict and the (Re)configurations of Otherness in the Evros/Edirne Borderlands. In M. Lemberg-Pedersen, S. M. Fett, L. Mayblin, N. Sahraoui, & E. M. Stambøl (Eds.), *Postcoloniality and Forced Migration* (pp. 144–160). Bristol University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529218213.ch009>
- The Killing of Muhammad Al-Arab*. (2020). <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-muhammad-al-arab>
- The Killing of Muhammad Gulzar*. (2020). <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-muhammad-gulzar>
- Tombul, F. (2014). *Uluslararası Antlaşmalar Çerçevesinde Meriç Havzasında Su Yönetimi*. 147–155.
- Topak, Ö. E. (2014). The Biopolitical Border in Practice: Surveillance and Death at the Greece-Turkey Borderzones. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 32(5), 815–833. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d13031p>
- Turkey pushed migrants into Greece, minister say. (2022, August 16). *Ekathimerini*.
<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1191189/turkey-pushed-migrants-into-greece-minister-says/>
- Türkiye göçmenlere Avrupa kapılarını açtı. (2020, February 28). *Sputnik*.
<https://tr.sputniknews.com/20200228/sabah-gazetesi-turkiye-gocmenlere-avrupa-kapilarini-acti-1041497623.html>
- Türkiye göçmenlere Avrupa kapılarını açtı. (2020, February 28). *Sputnik*.
<https://tr.sputniknews.com/20200228/sabah-gazetesi-turkiye-gocmenlere-avrupa-kapilarini-acti-1041497623.html>

- Türkiye Sınırlarını Açtı; Mülteciler Sınırlara Akın Ediyor. (2020, February 28). T24. <https://t24.com.tr/haber/multeciler-avrupa-ya-gecmek-icin-kapikule-ye-yuruyor.863677>
- Türkmenoğlu, Y. (2020). Meriç Nehri'nin Edirne Bölümünde 1947-2019 Periyodundaki Yatak Değişimlerinin CBS Ve UA Teknolojileri İle Analizi. *Jeomorfolojik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 2020(4), 32–41.
- Ulaş, H. (2012). *The Question of Cultural Genocide and Racism: Personal Reflections on the Case of Northern Cyprus*.
- Üstübcü, A. (2019). The impact of externalized migration governance on Turkey: technocratic migration governance and the production of differentiated legal status. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0159-x>
- Üstübcü, A., & Karadağ, S. (2020). *Refugee protection in Turkey during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, Turkey Interim Report*. 822625, 39. <http://admigov.eu>
- van Houtum, H. (2000). European Perspectives on Borderlands: An Overview of European Geographical Research on Borders and Border Regions. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 15(1), 56–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2000.9695542>
- van Houtum, H. (2005). The geopolitics of borders and boundaries. *Geopolitics*, 10(4), 672–679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040500318522>
- van Houtum, H. (2021). Beyond 'Borderism': Overcoming Discriminative B/Ordering and Othering. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 112(1), 34–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12473>
- van Houtum, H., & Eker, M. (2016). Redesigning Borderlands: Using the Janus-Face of Borders as a Resource. In C. Brambilla, J. Laine, & G. Bocchi (Eds.), *Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making* (p. 12). Routledge.
- van Houtum, H., & Spierings, B. (2012). Borderscapes. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 18(2), 3–6.
- van Houtum, H., & van Naerssen, T. (2002). Bordering, ordering and othering. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 93(2), 125–136. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9663.00189>
- Vrasti, W. (2008). The strange case of ethnography and international relations. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 37(2), 279–301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829808097641>

We Were Slaves. (2022, June 28). Lighthouse Reports.

<https://www.lighthousereports.nl/investigation/we-were-slaves/>

Yalçın, V. (2021). *The European Union: bliss or burden to refuged people? How EU policies affect refuged people's well-being and migrant trajectories in three different cities in Turkey: Kayseri, Istanbul and Edirne*. Radboud University Nijmegen.

Yıldırım, O. (2006). The 1923 population exchange, refugees and national historiographies in Greece and Turkey. *East European Quarterly*, 40(1), 45–70.

Yılmaz, Ç. (2018, December 8). Ölüm koridoru! *Milliyet*.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (IN TURKISH)

1. Questions Regarding Demographic/Socio-economic Situation

The aim here is to get to know the socio-economic status of the interlocutors in general terms.

- 1.1. Could you indicate your age?
- 1.2. Gender (Note before asking)
- 1.3. Do you work? / What job are you busy with?
- 1.4. How many people live in your house?
- 1.5. Are there any other employees in the household besides you?
- 1.6. The last school you graduated from?
- 1.7. Do you only speak Turkish or do you speak other languages?
- 1.8. Are you (of) immigrant (origin)?

2. Relationship to the Border

- 2.1. Can you describe what the border looks like?
- 2.2. Can you describe what the border used to look like?
- 2.3. How is it determined where the border line crosses on the river?
- 2.4. How is your communication with the Greek fishermen and the military of the other side?

3. Opinions on Border Crossings

- 3.1. Are there people crossing from Greece to Türkiye? Or just from Türkiye to Greece?
- 3.2. Are you observing the transition?
- 3.3. Where do those who “cross” usually come from?
- 3.5. How do they cross?
- 3.6. There are newspaper articles indicating that the Greek police practiced pushbacks, have you witnessed it yourself?
- 3.7. Do you feel sorry for those pushed back at the border?
- 3.8. Have you ever taken a step to help?
- 3.9. Have you crossed yourself before?
- 3.10. Greeks and Bulgarians come to Türkiye for shopping, do you also cross the border for shopping?
- 3.11. How is your relationship with Greek tourists?

4. Questions Regarding the Events Beginning in February 2020

- 4.1. Were there big migrant groups around here during the events in March?
- 4.2. In Karaağaç, we learned that migrants demolished the greenhouses of the villagers to build tents for themselves. Has similar damage occurred here? How do you deal with those who are waiting to cross your border?
- 4.4. Have you had such an experience?
- 4.5. How do you think of the way Greece treats migrants?
- 4.6. Have your views of the Greeks changed with these recent events?

5. Questions Regarding the Visa Exemption and Readmission Agreement Signed in 2015

- 5.1. What are your thoughts on the agreement reached between Türkiye and the European Union on migration in 2015?
- 5.2. Recently, there was talk of a special visa liberalization for those living at the border. If it had come to life, would you go to Greece often?
- 5.3. Do you think the European Union has done its part?
- 5.4. Should Türkiye accept returned refugees?